

Bavarian News

Vol. 5, Nr. 1

U.S. Army Garrisons Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Ansbach, Schweinfurt, and Garmisch

January 14, 2009

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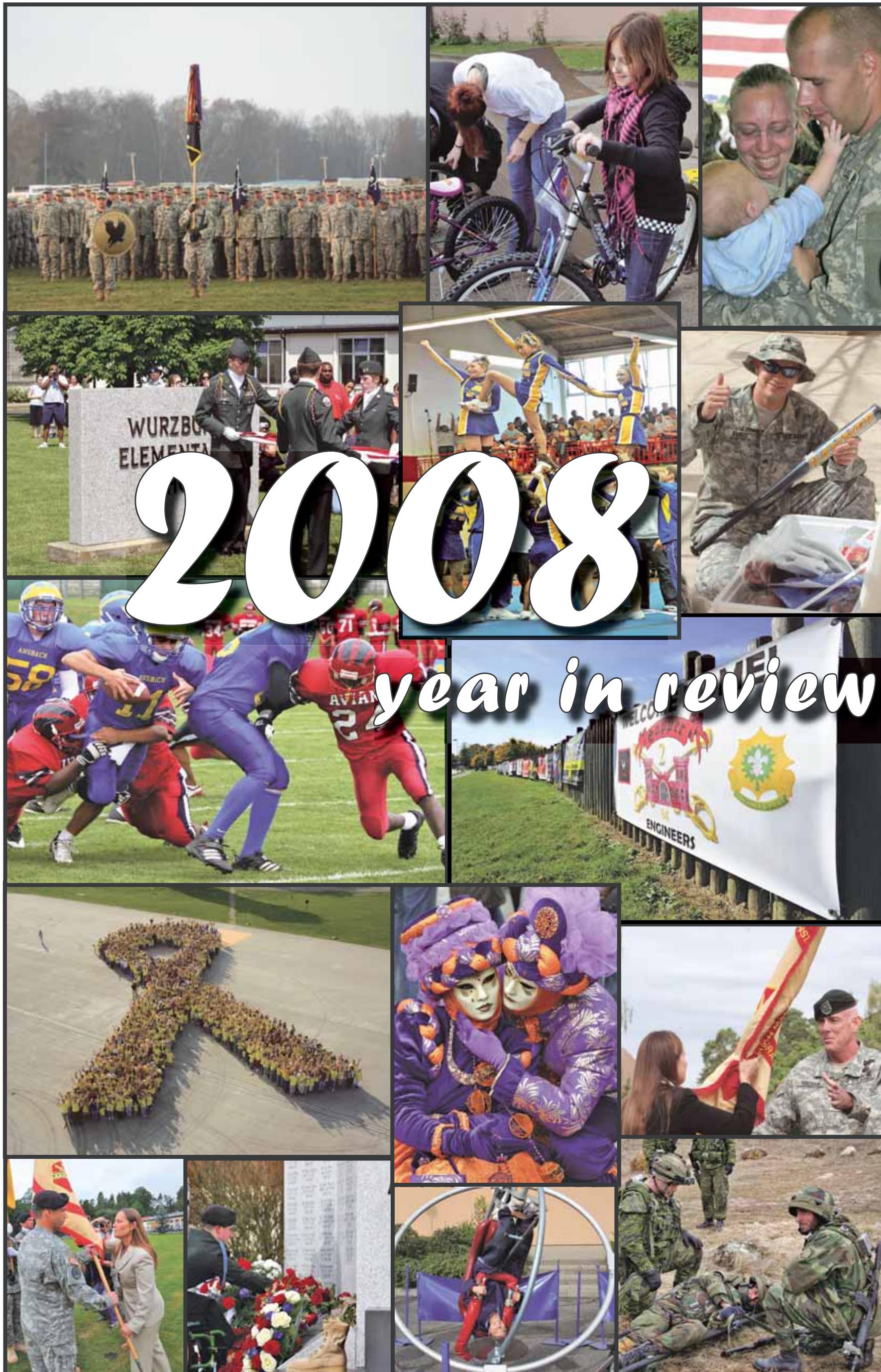
It is by no means all-inclusive. We wish we were able to include all of the newsworthy, funny, interesting, and sometimes sad events that touched our lives last year. Instead, with limited space and personnel, we've been able to pull together some items we hope you will enjoy looking back on.

Happy New Year!

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For road conditions and the latest community news, visit www.grafenwoehr.army.mil



COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Kudos to our directorates for their awards, accomplishments in 2008

The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr mission is to provide installation capabilities and services and support expeditionary operations for JMTTC, V Corps and transient training units to ensure a Strong Army for the Nation and a quality of life for our Soldiers, Families and Department of Defense civilians commensurate with their service.

That being said, the year 2008 was a spectacular success for our Garrison in conducting our mission and keeping us Army Strong!



Our facilities, services, and our people set themselves apart and were duly recognized for their accomplishments and achievements during this challenging year. Our efforts for Army Transformation are now considered a model for other garrisons.

Three major events defined the challenges and success of our garrison in 2008—the move of 172nd Infantry Brigade from Schweinfurt to Grafenwoehr and its subsequent deployment, and the redeployed of 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment. The successful relocation of the 172nd to Grafenwoehr took place from January through June through the combined efforts of DPTMS, DHR, DPW, PAIO, DES and DOL.

After completing the move, these garrison directorates immediately began the simultaneous

redeployment/reintegration of 2SCR and deployment of the 172nd during the September through November time frame. Our teamwork ensured this challenge was smoothly executed.

Our **Directorate of Emergency Services** not only provided its day-to-day support of installation access and vehicle registration, but developed proactive programs to prevent potential programs. DES conducted joint patrols with the German police in the cities of Amberg and Weiden which resulted in fewer disturbances.

DES also established a courtesy patrol with 2SCR which also helped limit the number of incidents.

In addition to the 172nd, the **Bavaria MEDDAC** Headquarters moved from Leighton Barracks in Wuerzburg to our South Camp (Vilseck). The Bavaria MEDDAC oversees clinic services, nursing and administrative functions for the region. Approximately 120 BMEDDAC employees and their family members now call our garrison and the surrounding area home.

Major changes, such as what we experienced in 2008, can sometimes cause distractions which lead to accidents, but our workplace safety enforcement efforts helped reduce employee accident rates to 30 percent below the average experienced by other USAREUR units and the German economy.

Our **Safety Office** also performed more than 700 building and workplace inspections while also supporting the 172nd arrival, 2SCR reintegration activities, and 172nd deployment railhead operations.

With the arrival of 172nd Soldiers

in 2008 also came the completion by our **Directorate of Public Works** of the more than 800-unit Neztberg Housing Area and its adjacent elementary and middle schools, Child Develop Center, and the Child and Youth Services facility.

I'm proud to say that our DPW successfully housed the Soldiers and Families of the 172nd by placing furniture in the new barracks for the Single Soldiers, and placing them in housing in nearby Netzberg, Erbendorf, Kemnath, and over 400 private rentals.

Our **Housing Office** received the 2008 Army best traditional housing office team award along with a staff member being individually recognized.

A multifunctional training building at South Camp (Vilseck) was also completed to use for the reintegration of 2SCR. This building allowed all reintegration activities to be consolidated and conducted in one facility. In all, more than 200 DPW projects totaling \$51 million were completed in 2008.

The quality of our service and the pride our staff takes in its work was demonstrated by the recognition our **Directorate of Logistics**' CSM Lawrence T. Hickey's Dining Facility was named IMCOM-E's best large dining facility in the large category in 2008, and subsequently was awarded runner-up in the large dining facility category for DA's Phillip A. Connelly Awards Program for Excellence in Army Food Service.

DOL's Regional Supply Support Activity, Supply and Services Division, and Installation Property Book Office were both runners-up for IMCOM-E Supply of Excellence

Awards.

We are also proud of the support we provided to Soldiers and their Families in 2008. Our **Morale Welfare and Recreation**'s Financial Readiness program developed a program called "Dumping Debt During Deployment" and its creator received the Secretary of the Army Quality of Life Award for Best Practice.

Army Family Covenant played a significant role in the lives of our Soldiers in 2008. Our Child Youth and School Services offered expanded programs and services such as Tone with Tots; Mega Play openings; Friday evening and Saturday openings for respite care for children; school liaison and support services; child development services; youth services; and support services.

Also in support of the Army Family Covenant, our Special Events staff executed 13 entertainment events, eight Army Entertainment/Armed Forces Entertainment performances; four USO celebrity performances; and the 2008 U.S. Army Soldier's Show in addition to the normal programs they conduct.

We not only enhanced the quality of life and wellbeing of the entire community, we also kept the community informed. Informing the community opportunities and services offered through the Army Family Covenant was accomplished through our award winning Army Command Information Programs. Our newspaper, the **Bavarian News**, was named the Best Tabloid-sized Newspaper in the Army in its annual Major General Keith L. Ware Awards along with three other print Keith L. Ware Awards being for our Public

Affairs staff. **American Forces Network** (AFN) Bavaria, which is located at South Camp, earned Keith L. Ware Awards for broadcast excellence at the same time, along with having its journalists sweep the top three broadcaster awards and being selected as the AFN station of the year.

Our **Equal Employment Opportunity** manager was selected for the EEOC Meritorious Research Fellows Program from more than 200 applicants, and worked with the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission in developing NSPS measuring tools to help guarantee equal employment opportunities in the federal sector.

Our Army Substance Abuse Programs in Grafenwoehr and our indirect garrison USAG Hohenfels, were inspected by both Installation Management Command-Europe and Department of the Army and both programs not only passed inspections, but the best practices done during the review of procedures will be adopted for use Army-wide.

I'm proud to be associated with a place that has established itself as not only a model for Army Transformation and but also for support of expeditionary operations.

The accomplishments of this garrison and its staff in 2008 define Army Strong. The Soldiers that call our garrison home can perform their mission (whether they are deployed or redeployed) knowing that their quality of life and that of their families is one of, if not the best, in the Army!

*Col. Chris Sorenson
Commander, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

CSM CORNER



Ring in new year with adventure, KONTAKT

As we continue to face falling temperatures and snow and icy conditions, I remind everyone to remain vigilant on the road.

Safety First

By now, all motorists should have placed their snow tires on and made efforts to winterize their vehicles.

And while these measures will increase your driving safety, I urge you to pay special attention to the snow plows and other snow equipment that are showing up on German roadways.



As the plow drivers are clearing the roads, they are likely to take up more room than a standard size vehicle, causing you to drive closer to your lane's border.

And as they check the curbs, they may not see your vehicle approaching. Stay aware, stay alive!

Also, visit http://www.per.hqsareur.army.mil/services/safetydivision/winter_driving.htm for slideshows and videos on winter driving safety from the U.S. Army Europe.

Also, I ask parents of school-age children

to ensure they are dressed appropriately for the weather. There may be times when a school bus arrives late because of breakdowns or other unplanned delays.

If this happens, students could be forced to wait at their bus stop longer than planned in clothing that is not warm enough for the weather conditions.

A Brand New Year

We're halfway through the first month of the New Year. Last year was full of lots of changes for the personnel and residents of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr. I'd like to personally thank each of you for your understanding and cooperation during some pretty tumultuous times.

We grew; we renovated and refurbished; we tore down and built new facilities. We adjusted some our policies.

We deployed and redeployed by the thousands. We welcomed several Soldiers, units, and personnel, and we bid a sad farewell to many other Soldiers.

It has been a trying transition for many of us, but somehow we made it through. I am proud to be a part of such a resilient community. But there's still a lot of work to do.

I ask each of you to join with me, the commander, and the U.S. Army Europe command structure as we continue our mission in 2009.

Warrior Adventure Quest

And finally, there are two very important programs I'd like to highlight: the U.S. Army's new Warrior Adventure Quest and the KONTAKT club.

WAQ is an Army program designed to help redeploying Soldiers avoid accidents and make the adjustment from a high-paced, high-adrenaline combat environment to garrison or "home" life.

Specifically, it combines high-adventure outdoor activities, including everything from skydiving and paintball to rock climbing and stock car racing, with Battlemind training to help with the adjustment back to a calmer lifestyle.

The Army hopes WAQ will help reduce accidents among redeploying Soldiers.

According to Army officials, nearly 200 Soldiers have died in accidents within one year of returning from combat, and 168 of those took place within the first six months of redeployment. And that figure doesn't include 2008 casualties.

More than half of the fatalities were E-5 and below and involved high speed or alcohol.

After successful pilot programs were implemented at two U.S. and one European garrisons last year, it is finally coming to USAG Grafenwoehr.

USAG Grafenwoehr's MWR Outdoor Recreation will kick off one of the first and

the largest Warrior Adventure Quest Programs in Europe Region today. It will launch with approximately 4,300 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment Soldiers and other returning units within the garrison's footprint.

Locally, WAQ activities will include Discover Scuba, high ropes course, ski touring, paintball, Klettersteig climbing, and rappelling.

German-American Friendship

KONTAKT is a German-American friendship club that is open to both military and civilian personnel.

It is dedicated to enhancing the relationship between German and American communities and is a great group for those who want to learn and enjoy the culture and language.

Many trips and events are planned throughout the year. Contact your local KONTAKT club for more information (At Grafenwoehr, contact Walter Brunner at CIV 09641-3982. At Vilseck, contact Wolfgang Glownia at CIV 0179-7854526).

Happy New Year!

*Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios
CSM, U.S. Army
Garrison Grafenwoehr*

Bavarian News

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172nd Cav. Soldiers unearth years of ancient Iraqi history

by Capt. STEPHEN SHORT

172nd Public Affairs Officer

Soldiers from the 1-10 Cavalry Regiment, 172 Infantry Brigade unearthed potentially ancient pottery artifacts, while preparing to excavate a site for the building of a patrol base for the Iraqi Army in the Mahawil area.

The Soldiers immediately stopped construction and restricted access to the site until someone with archeological expertise could be contacted and survey the site to determine if the pottery shards were of cultural importance and antiquity.

The C Troop Commander, Capt. Christopher Neyman arrived at the scene and ensured the site was protected by establishing a 24 hour perimeter guard around the site.

The site was a large mound of earth about 15 to 20 meters tall and about 150 meters wide.

"We talked with the Iraqi army at the patrol base, and we all agreed that it was important to get someone to the site to verify if we had found an archaeological site," said Neyman.

Dr. Ismail Hijara, senior advisor of Iraqi cultural heritage, arrived at the scene with the regimental commander where surveys of several areas were conducted on the camp.

Hijara tentatively concluded that the pottery

found was from the Parthia Period, which was the third Iranian kingdom to dominate the area in ancient times.

The pottery pieces could be dated as far back as 300 B.C. to 1 A.D. and are very rare, said Hijara.

Hijara will be contacting the Babil director of Archeological Sites for further guidance.

Hijara has been involved in archaeology for more than 45 years.

He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Cultural Studies from the University of Baghdad and his Doctorate of Archaeological Studies from London University.

2SCR troops honor spouses during largest ever Freedom Team Salute

Story and photo by ALICE ADLER

Special to the Bavarian News

With the Memorial Gym in Vilseck overflowing with Soldiers and their spouses and families Jan. 8, the 2d Stryker Cavalry Regiment honored its spouses who recently endured a 15-month long deployment separation in one of the U.S. Army's largest ceremonies of its kind.

During the Freedom Team Salute ceremony, Soldiers presented their family members with Freedom Team Salute packets containing a certificate, a letter from the Secretary of the Army and the Army Chief of Staff, and a Star Spouse pin.

"We would not have been successful if not for the families who supported us," said 2SCR Commander Col. John RisCassi of the unit's recent deployment. "You are an inspiration to us all and a fine example of what it means to be Army Strong."

The Freedom Team Salute program was created in 2005 as an official way to recognize the support structure that allows Soldiers to do their jobs.

"It is just one way for the Army and for the Soldier to recognize spouses for their personal sacrifice, their call to duty and their long time support," said Col. (Ret.) Richard H. Green, Sr. who spoke at the event. "While the Army can recruit a soldier, we must also retain the family."

2SCR FRSA Cindy Joyner first had the idea to recognize the long-suffering spouses in early December. She presented the idea to RisCassi who was enthusiastic about the plan.

"You can never do enough for Army spouses," said RisCassi. Over the next few weeks Joyner coordinated 1,726 Freedom Team Salute packets that were individually personalized for the spouses in the regiment, the most packets ever since the program started.

"Cindy did an awful lot of work," said RisCassi, "somehow they pulled all of it together and made it work."



2SCR's 2Lt. Travis Lloyd pins an Army Spouse pin on wife Jenny during the ceremony.

The sheer size of the event was "unprecedented in the history of the Army," said Green

And they are not finished.

"We'll continue to promote the program for the single soldiers," said Joyner, noting children, relatives, neighbors, veterans or anyone the Soldier feels supported them during the deployment can be nominated for a packet at www.freedomteamsalute.com.

The spouses and Soldiers filling the gym last week were proud of what they had accomplished during the deployment.

"She did really well, especially being in a different country and on her own without family around," said Staff Sgt. Melcaides Lopez of his wife, Stevie.

This was Lopez's second deployment in four

years and this one was especially difficult for his family. He noted that their 10- and 11-year-old sons were a handful, but "she held her own."

"It is one of the things we don't get to do enough," said 1st Sgt. Terry Vaughn. "The spouses are the unsung heroes. It was good to be able to do that."

Vaughn said his wife Amanda and sons William and Todd "did very well" during the deployment and were very supportive and strong.

"It was nice that they were able to do something for all of the spouses," said Amanda, "I really appreciated it."

"2nd Cav. spouses did a phenomenal job while we were deployed," said RisCassi. "They have the toughest job in the Army."

European Command program aims to reduce caregiver fatigue

by DONNA MILES

American Forces Press Service

Recognizing the risk of burnout among caregivers providing warrior and family support, U.S. European Command plans to kick off a program this spring that incorporates principles introduced by bestselling author and lecturer Dr. Stephen Covey.

EUCOM is putting together a compassion-fatigue program based on principles in Covey's "The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People," Wayne Boswell, the command's quality of life chief, told American Forces Press Service.

Delegates at two EUCOM deployment support conferences identified the need for such a program to help prevent burnout among key volunteers, chaplains, medical providers, counselors, family support staff and family readiness group leaders struggling to provide warrior and family support, Boswell said.

The result is the POWER -- or Provider Outreach While Enhancing Readiness -- program. Developed in cooperation with the FranklinCovey Inc. consulting group, POWER is designed as self-help training for front-line staff struggling with the demands of providing warrior and family support.

"These are the folks who never ask for help,"

Boswell said. "But many feel overwhelmed and face high stress levels as they try to meet all the requirements on them."

Caregiver fatigue is particularly pressing within the chaplain corps, which Boswell called a cornerstone of the caregiver network.

The POWER program is designed to help participants diagnose and understand fatigue, then build strategies to overcome it. They will "walk" through a series of analysis and planning exercises to determine their risk of fatigue and develop a strategy to mitigate or prevent it. The goal, Boswell said, is to help caregivers master the tools needed to achieve a sustainable professional quality of life.

The program emphasizes communication, personal dynamics and each person's value as part of a team. "It's a very basic program, . built on a lot of foundational principles," Boswell said.

More than 20 caregivers tested the program's concepts in September, and Boswell said he expects to begin rolling out the program theaterwide beginning in the spring. Initially, he hopes to reach about 150 people, who will report back on its value.

"Our hope is that this will decrease their stress and help them realize that they truly are human and have parameters," he said. "They are vital

to our mission success."

Covey calls communication -- one of the POWER program's foundations -- a key in helping not just caregivers, but also military families struggling with the challenges of deployments, separations and redeployments.

During a Pentagon Channel interview last week, Covey advocated "empathetic communication," which he described as listening within the other person's frame of reference. The result, he said, is better understanding and affirmation of the speaker's worth and value.

Covey encouraged deployed troops to keep a journal to increase their self-awareness. He also recommended that military families develop a family mission statement that strengthens them through common values and principles.

"The separation will be difficult, but you will be unified through a common vision and purpose," he said. "So many unbelievable benefits come by being committed to a set of values and living by them."

Covey said he holds service members sacrificing for their country in the highest regard.

"I admire so much what these people are doing and the tremendous sacrifices they are making for their families and the country," he said.

Frozen lakes, ponds: fun but dangerous

IMCOM-E press release

Winter weather conditions are ideal for fun activities, especially for children, but they also can increase the number of accidents.

The Installation Management Command-Europe Safety Office is advising everyone to stay aware while outside and follow the following safety rules when ice skating, sliding or just walking on frozen ponds and lakes:

- Everyone should know, and parents shall emphasize to their children, that the most important safety rule to learn is that there's no such thing as safe ice.

- Never go or skate alone. Children shouldn't be allowed on a ponds or lakes unsupervised.

- In Germany, the ice has to be checked and inspected by the local community. It has to have a thickness of 15cm (about 5 inches) before it can be entered. Watch for signs or ask members of the local community if the area is approved. Be aware that conditions might change.

- Beware of ice around partially submerged objects, such as trees, logs, brush, embankments, or dam structures; the ice is thin around these objects.

- Don't enter ice after dark.

- Don't congregate in one area.

- Stay away from cracks, seams, pressure ridges, slushy areas and darker areas that signify thinner ice.

Army Family Action Plan Conference set Feb. 19-20 in Amberg

USAG Grafenwoehr AFAP

"They ought to . . .", "Why don't they . . .", "If I were in charge I would . . .", are thoughts we often have, and the Army Family Action Plan provides the means for not only expressing these thoughts to leadership, but helping to see that they are implemented.

The mission of AFAP is to help Army leaders address the needs and concerns of the total Army Family: Soldiers, family members, retirees, and civilians.

Whether it is changing the hours of the Shopette, to increasing SGLI, or creating a military Thrift Savings Plan, AFAP is the vehicle for raising ideas concerning what works, what doesn't, and what will fix it.

Issue submission boxes are currently located throughout the USAG Grafenwoehr community, and, working in conjunction with Community FIRST, issue forms will be available online from the Grafenwoehr homepage (www.grafenwoehr.afap.mil) by clicking on the Community FIRST/AFAP link.

Simply fill out the form with your concern as well as a resolution, add your contact information if you would like a direct follow up, and drop it in the box.

This year's USAG Grafenwoehr AFAP Conference will be Feb. 19-20 at the Amberg Congress Centrum.

For more information or to volunteer to be a part of the conference, contact Ruth Cowart, AFAP Program Manager for USAG Grafenwoehr, at 09662-83-2650 or ruth.cowart@eur.army.mil.

a look back at

2008



Photo by Dave Melancon



(Left) Col. Nil "Chris" Sorenson (left) takes command of U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Aug. 14. (Below, left) Col. Jeffrey A. Sinclair, commander of the 172nd Infantry Brigade joins brigade Command Sgt. Maj. Steven W. McClaflin in casing the unit's colors for its upcoming deployment during the 'Blackhawk Rendezvous' Nov. 13.

(Above) 2SCR Soldiers salute during the uncasing of the regiment's colors in a ceremony at Vilseck's Memorial Fitness Center Nov. 25. (Right) Netzaberg students assist elementary school principal Barbara Mueller and invited guests with the ribbon cutting that marked the official opening of the Netzaberg elementary and middle schools Aug. 29.



Photo by Josef Fiegl



Photo by Dave Melancon

RETIREE CORNER

Increase in one-pound mailing restrictions under consideration

by DAVE STEWART
Graf Retiree Council president

Retiree business consumed the Garrison Council in the last quarter of the calendar year. A series of events started with a "hot wash" on the results of the Garrison Retirement Appreciation Day event held in November.

Critiques generally gave the Garrison good marks, but we are looking at improvements for the next event which will be held in October 2009.

Major points of participants' feedback were related to medical support, which was hindered this year because of the overload of active duty treatment and screenings that conflicted with the RAD date.

The garrison and council will continue to work with the Medical Clinic to seek ways to increase and improve services for the next RAD, which we hope will not conflict with active duty events.

In mid-November, I represented the garrison at the Army Europe Retiree Council President's Table in Heidelberg. This is where the garrison RC presidents update the AERC president on local issues.

This event was held in conjunction with the Army Europe Retiree Council's Retirement Appreciation Day. Lieutenant General

(Ret.) Fred Vollrath, the co-chair for the Chief of Staff Army Retiree Council gave an update on retiree issues being worked at Department of the Army and the Department of Defense level, including citing the joint service initiative currently being considered at DoD to raise the overseas retiree one-pound mailing restriction to a higher level.

This is the latest of several recent attempts to raise this restriction which is extremely unpopular with retirees, particularly for those wanting to mail small gifts to their relatives living, working, or studying in the United States, or to relatives serving in conflict zones.

Lt. General Vollrath cited some of the recent successes including the establishment of the TRICARE dental program and the Veterans Administration direct deposit of benefits to foreign banks.

The establishment of the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance to partially offset the reduction of SBP benefits when a surviving spouse is in receipt of certain VA benefits and the coming of the TRICARE Managed Care Support Contract to assist all beneficiaries as more and more health care services are received from host nation providers.

Col. (Ret.) Robert Mentell, the AERC president, stated that the TRICARE program in Europe was being overwhelmed with claimants based on the restrictions of active duty family members to military health clinics. Retirees

were feeling this pinch across Europe.

Vollrath cautioned all retirees to consider Long Term Health Care. One in four requires this protection to avoid being financially ruined when one is no longer able to care for themselves and needs 24-7 attention in a nursing facility or home.

He said that several companies offer this insurance that can be located at www.ltcfeds.com. One note of caution: under the Federal Long Term Care Insurance Program, benefits are lower if you reside overseas. Generally you only receive 80 percent of what you would receive in the United States, and even if you elect an option for an unlimited benefit period, the program will only pay for a 10-year period overseas (in the United States, there is no time limit).

The efforts by this senior retiree organization clearly shows that the Chief of Staff Army Council is a dynamic group vigorously working with the senior Defense leadership to improve the benefits and life of retirees and their surviving spouses.

Grafenwoehr Garrison Council

Your Grafenwoehr Garrison Council held its quarterly meeting in early December. The U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Commander Col. Nils Sorenson was the guest speaker. He was accompanied by Garrison Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios-Rodriguez.

Sorenson recognized the value of the Retiree Council and stated the "Military for Life" con-

cept will support retiree's needs and better integrate retirees into the improvement of community living for Soldiers and their families.

Specifically he said "retirees can volunteer and get involved with the deployment and redeployment activities of Soldiers." He said he wanted the RC Council to be the "model Retiree Council in Europe."

In addition to improving on the Retirement Appreciation Day event the Council discussed better ways and methods to keep retirees within the footprint informed of retiree news, events, and activities.

The council is working hard on finding better ways to communicate with our constituency which now spreads from Berlin to Garmisch. If there are issues you would like us to address at our quarterly meetings or in this monthly report, send an e-mail to SGM85@t-online.de or at the following address:

Box R-6
CMR 415
APO AE 09114

Our next column will continue the discussion we had last month on the death of retirees in Europe.

Until then, stay safe during these critical weather days as we move into winter.

Garmisch looks back on 2008

by JOHN REESE
Garmisch Public Affairs Officer

From lost ID cards to emergency child care, from injured skiers to newlyweds needing auto repairs, from Soldiers and Sailors to Airmen and Marines, U.S. Army Garrison Garmisch personnel stepped up in 2008 and did the job without hesitation or complaint.

Our mission is to consistently provide exceptional programs and services for our customers in Southern Bavaria.

Looking back on the past year, with so many challenges that came and went and are now memories, we take a moment to reflect on the accomplishments of USAG Garmisch.

No matter what the mission was, it was always the people who make up the community who pulled together and got the job done. Garmisch is a small garrison, true, but it is fortunate to have some of the best and brightest wearing the many hats that inevitably come with such a small garrison.

Garmisch is pleased to have military police man Sgt. 1st Class Todd Allison honored as the 2007 Installation Management Command NCO of the Year, and in 2008 the garrison had the

distinction of seeing MP Sgt. Marco Garced become the IMCOM Soldier of the Year just prior to his promotion from specialist.

The garrison MPs further distinguished themselves by working with the NATO School and the German Army to conduct multinational range days and weapons qualifications, with many of the garrison Soldiers earning the prestigious German Schutzenschnur for qualifying with the 7.62 MG3 and 9mm pistol. Some of our MP warriors moved on to new assignments and others take up the guidon.

Garmisch said Auf Wiedersehen to Chaplain (Maj.) Richard Pacania who moved on to the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, Calif., and Provost Marshal Maj. VickiLynn Peters who is currently serving downrange in Iraq.

We added Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans to the team like Chaplain (Capt.) Lyle Shackelford, who is already moving on after being hand-selected to minister to a Warrior Transition Unit and Provost Marshal Capt. Scott Woida from downrange.

We saw longtime civilian employees like driver Max Lichtenstern with 45 years of service to the garrison, and Postmaster Bill Notz with 20 years in the Army Post Office

following his first retirement as a command sergeant major, leave our team to enjoy their well-earned retirements.

We added entire new sections like the new Army Community Service Center. The ACS has already helped visiting Soldiers with Army Emergency Relief loans, counseling, and establishing an Emergency Family Assistance Center for an exercise even before they officially opened.

The garrison continued to improve all customer services by consolidating all important services into one building, making in- or out-processing faster and more efficient.

The ID card office became properly staffed with trained, experienced personnel, serving hundreds of local customers. The Education Center was added to the other services such as Housing, Vehicle Registration, and Transportation, making Bldg. 203 truly "one-stop shopping."

The commissary got a full makeover and a new manager, adding self-checkouts, increasing the array of products, and modifying their hours to better accommodate a community that includes shoppers from Munich and across Southern Bavaria.

The Family Morale Welfare and Recreation

folks once again achieved best small garrison recognition for the library for the fifth year in a row and the expanded services of the Pete Burke Community Center for the second year running.

The Arts & Crafts, Mueller Fitness Center and Outdoor Recreation, previous award winners, continue to shine and improve services for the many warriors who annually use the garrison services—remarkably, when counting the guests of the AFRC Edelweiss Lodge & Resort, this garrison supported upwards of a half-million military and civilian employees and retirees.

The Child Development Center received early recertification under new, tougher guidelines, and was one of the first in IMCOM to do so. The School Age Services also was recertified.

Our Voting Assistance Officers registered hundreds of voters and helped dozens more insure that their voice was heard.

Even the main gates were improved, making access to post faster for personnel and providing better, safer protection from the elements to the security personnel.

USAG Garmisch - where people say: "it's great to be here!"

Garrison fitness center more than just a gym

Modern equipment, classes equal a 'Healthy Challenge' for new year

Story and photos by
JOHN REESE
Garmisch Public Affairs Officer

To the untrained eye, there is little difference between the old workout machines and free weights at the Mueller Fitness Center on Sheridan Kaserne, but to the experienced gym rat, the entirely new outfitting of equipment is more compact and smoother to work with.

"The new machines are more modern and streamlined," said Joe Liston, Garmisch FMWR. "The old machines were bulky."

Most of the new equipment was received just before the holidays, and the new crossover machine, one of the largest pieces, just arrived, said Liston.

The Mueller staff conducted familiarization classes to acquaint the community with the subtle differences, and anyone looking to get in shape can ask one of the gym trainers for help in tailoring a workout plan to safely build a six pack.

Sports and Fitness upgrades their equipment every few years, said FMWR director Steve Gauthier, "as a category A, mission essential program, it is critical that Soldiers have the latest equipment to ensure they are ready to meet the Army's mission."

Gauthier had scraped together much of the old equipment from closing kasernes like his previous duty station at Leighton Barracks in Würzburg.

Leighton Barracks is scheduled to be returned to the German government this week after shutting down August 1, 2008.

"The old free weights were mismatches put together," said Gauthier. "And the new machines keep up with the latest trends in cardio training."

In addition to the old-school weight training, Mueller Fitness Center has treadmills, stair climbers, elliptical machines and stationary bicycles upstairs along with a bank of televisions wired for headset use at each machine.

You just plug in, tune in the TV set



All new equipment awaits athletes at the Mueller Fitness Center. The state-of-the-art machines are more compact and easier to work with using the latest concepts in physical conditioning.

you want to watch, and the workout breezes past.

For those seeking a group effort, the Mueller staff offers a wide variety of classes such as Pilates, spinning (indoor bicycling), total toning and a new Latin dance-inspired aerobic workout called "Zumba" that is easy to follow repetitive dance moves guaranteed "to make you sweat, smile and shimmy!"

If more traditional sports activities spark a healthy interest, the gym also offers racquetball, basketball, volleyball and more.

Not in the mood to exercise and you'd rather be pampered? Mueller has its own spa featuring massage and beauty therapy.

From pedicures to waxing, from eyebrow shaping to full facial treatments, the therapists at Mueller have years of experience in the field of beauty and relaxation.

After working out, a session in the sauna can be an international experience with the students from the adjacent George C. Marshall Center.

A recent visit found one each war-

rior from Iraq, Mexico, Costa Rica, Macedonia and the United States discussing current events together in sweaty harmony.

Still not enough?

Mueller's annual Garmisch Healthy Lifestyle Challenge begins Feb. 9, added Gauthier.

"This is a six week challenge designed to help you create healthy eating habits and an exercise regimen for life," said Gauthier.

Participants form teams that compete with each other by earning points when they meet specific exercise and nutrition goals.

"Teams take many approaches, but for our team there are no meetings or emotional group hugs; they're

boring!" said Gauthier. "Our concept is to get in shape at your own pace and as a group we try to mix in some fun activities. If somebody comes up with a social event and or fun outing, we get together and do it."

Examples are skiing, snow shoeing, sledding, hiking, even Wii fitness and archery are on the schedule said Gauthier.

Guests of the AFRC Edelweiss are welcomed to visit the fitness center, conveniently located a two- minute walk from the hotel's front entrance.

For more information about any of the programs and classes, call the Mueller Fitness Center staff at DSN 440-2747.



(From left) Touring the Mueller Fitness Center in October 2008 are U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr Commander Col. Nils Sorenson, USAG Garmisch Manager Karen Santos, USAG Grafenwoehr Command Sgt. Maj. William Berrios, Commander of the 7th Army Joint Multinational Training Command Brig. Gen. David Hogg, and fitness center employee Tiffany Kelly.

Donations nearly double CFC goal

Community members give \$65,000 in excess, averaging \$160 per donor

by KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

Though many American families are feeling the pinch of the global economic slump, the Combined Federal Campaign Overseas saw an increase in donations this year from the Hohenfels community—more than \$50,000 worth.

The CFC-O allows employees to voluntarily contribute to a charity of their choice by choosing from the hundreds of organizations affiliated with the CFC.

During the 2008 campaign, which ran for eight weeks between October and December, Hohenfels employees gave more than \$155,000

in donations, \$65,000 beyond this year's goal of \$90,000.

Catrina Marsh, this year's CFC-O community/area project officer for U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels, said the total raised last year was about \$102,000.

"We had a few more Soldiers this year to count, but that doesn't account for the extra 50,000 some odd dollars. People were very generous this year," she said.

Marsh said at the beginning of the campaign she set a personal goal of raising at least \$120,000.

"I was really excited when we met that, and everything on top of it has just been icing on

the cake."

Hohenfels met its goal in only the fourth week of the eight-week campaign thanks in part to units that had more than 90 percent of their personnel participate, including Co. A, 1st Military Intelligence Battalion, 2 Air Support Operations Squadron, the Blacksheep, Vampire, and Raptor teams, USAG Hohenfels Department of Public Works, C and D Companies, 1st Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, and Instrumentation Training Analysis Computer Simulations and Support Public Works.

Sixty-one percent of employees at Hohenfels donated to one or more of their favorite charities

supporting everything from the environment and medical research to education and youth outreach programs.

Those donations worked out to an average gift of roughly \$160.

According to Marsh, each unit had an employee who, like her, voluntarily advertised and coordinated the campaign within their unit. Those unit coordinators were a big part of this year's success, she said.

Though it meant lots of extra work for her, she said assisting Hohenfels philanthropic efforts was extremely rewarding.

"It was fun for me to watch the numbers climb, getting higher and higher every week."



Sgt. First Class Jeffrey Worden receives a warm plate of food on a cold winter day from Klaus Zimmerman at the U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels dining facility Jan. 7. The garrison DFAC was recently named runner-up for the Philip A. Connelly Award for Excellence in Army Food Service in the best small garrison DFAC category at the U.S. Army Europe 41st Annual Food Service Awards Ceremony in Heidelberg Dec. 11.

DFAC takes honors during competition

Story and photo by Spc. FABIAN ORTEGA
USAREUR Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels dining facility placed runner-up in the best small garrison dining facility at the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe 41st Annual Food Service Awards Ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion in Heidelberg Dec. 11.

The ceremony recognized four dining facilities, a winner and runner up in both large and small garrison categories, with Philip A. Connelly Awards for Excellence in Army Food Service.

The Connelly award program, which evaluates Army dining facilities on food preparation, quality, and customer approval, was established in 1968 and is the gold standard for culinary competitions, food service officials said.

"We went into it having a good feeling we would (earn an award)," said Gregory Harvey,

cook supervisor of the USAG Hohenfels garrison DFAC. "We work hard. We have a good team."

Harvey said that listening to the customer is part of their success.

"We listen to their wants and needs, and try to do whatever we can. I try to get out there and ask people what they would like to see," he said.

"The dining facilities of today provide the widest range of cuisine at the highest level of quality," said Vivian McBride-Davis, chief of IMCOM-E's logistics division. "And the Soldier and civilian chefs that are present are clearly the cream of the crop and represent the best of what the Army has to offer."

Winner of the small garrison category was the 72nd Signal Battalion Dining Facility at Taylor Barracks in Mannheim.

The Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence T. Hickey Dining Facility at Camp Normandy in Grafenwoehr, Germany, won top honor as the best large garrison facility, with the South of the Alps Dining Facility in Vicenza, Italy named runner-up.

Local employees' honored for years of service

The following personnel were honored by the garrison:

40 years of service

■ Dieter Knott, Department of Public Works, Business Operation and Integration
■ Karolina Schnaus, DPW, Administration

35 years of service

■ Christoph Zollbrecht, DPW, Utilities
■ Josef Bruckbauer, DPW, Engineering Services Division
■ Kurt Schmalzbauer, 69th Signal
■ Siegfried Zollner, DPW,

Buildings and Grounds

■ Ingeborg Rathmayr, Departments of Emergency Services, Provost Marshall's Office
■ Daniel P. Hoeh, JMRC, Instrumentation Training Analysis Computer Simulations and Support
■ Trevor Gillies, U.S. Health Clinic
■ Daniel R. Haynes, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation
■ Evahn C. Taylor, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

30 years of service

■ Helmut Graf, DPW, Housing
■ Helmut Brock, USAG Grafenwoehr, Department of Logistics, Central Issue Facility

■ Melvin McBride, JMRC, ITACSS

25 years of service

■ Franz Steinberger, DPW, ESD
■ Georg Braun, DOL, Transportation Motor Pool
■ Heinrich Bauer, JMRC, Maintenance Division Hohenfels
■ Dietmar Meier, Airfield
■ Helmut Karg, DPW, ESD
■ Karl-Heinz Paulus, DOL, Food Service Branch
■ Peter Herrmann, Airfield
■ Ingrid Moegle, Commissary
■ Willibald Faderl, DOL, TMP
■ Robert Rappl, JMRC, Aviation
■ Lothar Hiller, BASOPS, Customer Service Team

■ Peter Pilz, Branch Movement Control Team

■ Richard Meier, DOL, Troop Issue Subsistence Activity
■ Daniel P. Voglesong, Safety
■ Robert D. Thompson, MWR

20 years of service

■ Maximilian Schulze, JMRC, MDH
■ Franz-Xaver Mulzer, JMRC, MDH
■ Siegfried Mayer, 8530th Civil Service Group
■ Edmund Eisele, DPW, B & G
■ Christian Kirchberger, 8530th CSG
■ Josef Hofmeister, DPW, Utilities
■ Kurt M. Hahn, MWR

15 years of service

■ Robert J. Linn, Ammunition Supply Point
■ Edward S. Green, MWR
■ Teresa A. Saucedo Garrison S-2

10 years of service

■ Konrad Koller, BASOPS, CFT Supply Point
■ Thomas Brogl, Ammunition Supply Point
■ Terry L. Quayle, 69th Signal
■ Kevin T. Lassiter, DOL, FSB
■ Peter A. Laflamme, JMRC, ITACSS
■ Miguel A. Caban, JMRC, Command Group
■ Truda G. Roper, MWR

Don't miss out on new year's fitness opportunities, classes

Story and photo by
KRISTIN BRADLEY
Bavarian News

It seems that each New Year, resolutions are made by countless people to exercise more and get in shape. It also seems that though people make the same resolution each year, by mid-February the desire has worn off.

For the Hohenfels community, that does not have to be the case.

Hohenfels may be a small post with a gym that's currently under construction, but new fitness classes and free personal training opportunities mean each person has access to everything they need to make 2009 the year they get fit.

As of this month, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels Family, Morale, Welfare, and Recreation will be offering a teen fitness program, unit physical training three mornings a week, and six different fitness classes for all fitness levels.

From spinning to Zumba, there are fifteen total classes offered each week with slots in the morning, at lunch, and in the afternoon.

Kathi Martin, a teacher at Hohenfels Elementary who became certified to teach Zumba, a dance-based aerobics class, in December, says for her and the people in her class, it is much more than a workout.

"When you leave the stress is gone, you don't have to take it all with you," she says.

"It is so fun. It's a party. It's lively, energetic, it's a total body workout. You leave feeling like you spent all your energy, but you have so much more."

Carla Nwoga, instructor of the popular Middle-C class, said she wanted to teach a class that removed any barriers people might have to getting fit.

"The classes are free, so money is no longer an issue. Classes are scheduled for three times a week, so attendance is no longer an issue. Classes are held during lunchtime, so convenience is no longer an issue. Classes are designed for the beginner as well as the expert, so level is not longer an issue," she said.

For those who prefer to workout alone but are unsure of what to do when they enter the fitness center, or for the fitness buffs looking for a new routine, Kareem Braithwaite, USAG Hohenfels

fitness coordinator, invites them to come set up an appointment with him for some personal training, free of charge.

Braithwaite, a certified personal trainer and former professional boxer, says he wants to help people develop a program they can take with them wherever they go.

He stresses that consistency is the most important part of fitness.

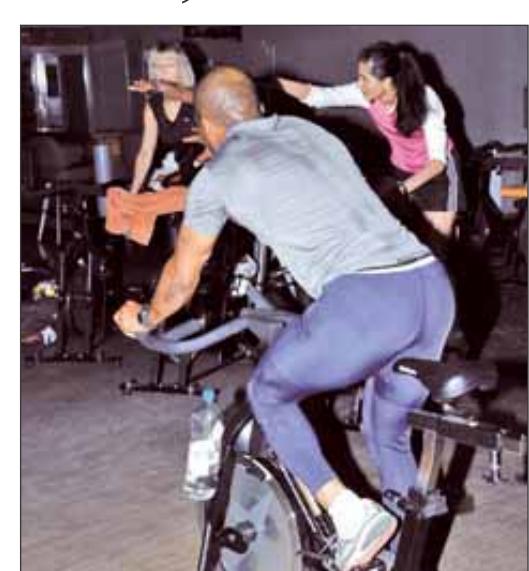
"People have it in their mind that 'I have to sweat or be in pain or be sore to do something.' No, you don't. Consistency is the key."

Braithwaite says he will gladly work with anyone, regardless of their fitness level.

He tries to keep his sessions to no more than 45 minutes, focusing on exercises that target multiple areas at once so people can make their workouts as time-effective as possible. He said he also intends for clients to be able to take what they've learned and do it without his help.

"You should be able to navigate the gym without me. I don't want you to be dependent on me for too long a time. I really like to help people make it their own."

To contact Braithwaite, stop by the fitness center in Bldg. 47, or call DSN 466-2726.



Attendees pedal hard as instructor Kareem Braithwaite (center, front) leads his lunch-time spinning class "30 Minute Slam" Jan. 6 at The Zone.

Hohenfels looks back on 2008

Photos by Kristin Bradley



(Above) A child from the Parsberg Children's Home inspects a new bike as two volunteers from U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels work to inflate the tires of other new bikes. As part of Hohenfels' first organized Make a Difference Day, the community donated needed toys and equipment, including 18 bikes, to the organization.

(Above right) Canadian and Afghan Soldiers practice caring for a wounded Soldier during a platoon attack operation March 17 in the Hohenfels Training Area. The exercise was part of a training course for Operational Mentor and Liaison Teams from NATO countries that will be attached to units in the Afghan National Army.



(Above) On April 30, 11 men from in and around the Hohenfels community raise the May pole in front of Bldg. 10 using the traditional method with long wooden poles. Each German town raises a May pole, or Maibaum, on May 1 to welcome spring.

(At left) A Falcon observer/controller talks to members of the German Army Logistic Battalion 472 about exiting the UH-1 Huey helicopter during the annual German/American partnership air assault exercise June 25. Both groups experienced unique training while fostering friendship between the units and their countries.

Conference to discuss, solve community concerns

Story and photo by
GARRY BARROWS
Special to the Bavarian News

One year ago, in January 2008, U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels held its second annual Army Family Action Plan conference, a grassroots, Army-wide initiative to identify and prioritize issues to enhance the standard of living for Soldiers and their Families.

Last year, many issues were generated for the conference to discuss, debate, refine, and report to the garrison for action.

Many were solved at the garrison level (such as raising speed limits on post from 30 to 50 kilometers an hour) while some were passed up the Army chain for further investigation (such as a 50/50 cost share for overseas shipment of a second privately owned vehicle.)

Just like last year, the Army Community Service in Bldg. 10, multiple locations around post, and the garrison Web site www.hohenfels.army.mil are offering the community an opportunity to provide the conference ideas, improvements, and commentary on the state of the garrison and the services provided.

By filling out an issue sheet anyone can have their idea heard loud and clear by the decision makers on post, at Installation Management Command and, in fact, all the way up to the Pentagon.

The issue sheet asks three simple questions:

- What is the problem?
- Why is it a problem?
- What are at least two solutions you have for the problem?

One suggestion retrieved from a red deposit box brought up an issue

of customer service. It seems the Hohenfels Military Clothing Sales was not located on post, but in the training compound of Albertshof, a hard to access area at the best of times and occasionally, as part of security training, totally unavailable.

In addition, Soldiers here for training that stay in nearby barracks often deplete needed merchandise.

A solution was submitted recommending the location be moved or a second location be established on main post.

The tentative completion date for the new Military Clothing Sales location in Building 9, next to the Post Exchange, is September, 2009.

Dental care for Family members is one of those subjects addressed on American Forces Network, but almost never in real life.

One resident submitted an issue sheet that suggested making the facilities available to Family Members during certain times, events or days.

From that suggestion, a special Family waiting list was established that was activated if any appointment was cancelled allowing quick reacting Family Members quality dental care.

In addition, a Family Appreciation Week was created where half of all appointments were made from the Family Member waiting list.

A problem offered, a solution found—one that made sense and worked.

Once again USAG Hohenfels is preparing to sponsor its third AFAP Conference, to be held at ACS Feb. 24-26, an enterprise that has clearly demonstrated that with literally the stroke of a pen, problems, hindrances, and inconveniences can be quickly

addressed and resolved to the benefit of the entire community.

There are more good ideas out there waiting to come to life, waiting to improve the quality of life for everyone in Hohenfels.

Do you have one? Let us know!

Fill out an issue sheet and bring it to ACS, e-mail it to conference coordinator Carol Stone at carol.stone@eur.army.mil, or deposit it in one of the red boxes located at the bowling

center, Post Exchange, Commissary, library, or other convenient locations on post no later than Jan. 22.

Stay tuned for great results from your suggestions this year too. You can make a difference!



Issues are discussed at last year's Army Family Action Plan conference by a cross section of Hohenfels residents, military and civilian, in work groups to determine the worthiness of any proposal and package it effectively for presentation to command. You can volunteer to participate in the February 24-26 conference by calling ACS at DSN 466-4860.

Community Spotlight

What's Happening

Grafenwoehr/
Vilseck Briefs

Military History Group

The Grafenwoehr Library will host a Military History Group meeting tonight from 6-8 p.m.

Karaoke Night

The Lagenbruck Center in Vilseck will host Karaoke Night at the Zone Sports Bar Friday from 9 p.m.-1 a.m.

PCS, ETS Soldiers briefs

The Central Processing Facility is hosting a Permanent Change of Station/Transition brief Jan. 20 for Soldiers on assignment instructions or ETS'ing from the military.

They will brief out-processing procedures and clearing requirements. For more information contact Tile Siliga at DSN 476-2101, CIV 09662-83-2101. Family members are welcome to attend.

AFN Europe survey

Go to www.afneurope.net before Feb. 19 and take the "Become A Revolutionary" survey.

The information you submit will help AFN improve the radio and television programming they provide. All answers submitted are confidential and anonymous.

Travel opportunities

To sign-up for these trips now, call Vilseck ITR DSN 476-2563, CIV 09662-83-2563 or Grafenwoehr ODR DSN 475-7402, CIV 09662-83-7402.

Daytrips

- Rothenburg, 2 Castle Trip, Jan. 25
- Prague, Czech, Feb. 1
- Karlovy-Vary, Feb. 8
- Brussels and Brugge, Belgium, Feb. 12-16
- 2 Castle Trip, Feb. 22
- Salzburg, Austria, March 13-15
- Barcelona, Costa Del Sol, Granada and Seville, Spain & Avignon, France Trip, April 3-12
- Euro-Disney and Paris Trip, April 6-9
- Mosel Wine and Medieval Castles, May 1-3
- Cinque Terre, Pisa and Lucca Italy, May 21-25

Thrift Shop news

The Vilseck Thrift Shop will be open the first Saturday of each month from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more info call DSN 476-2649, CIV 09662-83-2649.

ODR ski trips

The following trips are being offered:

mba



FACE-TO-FACE COURSES

Course start dates:

LDR 531: January 13, 2009
***MGT 521: January 28, 2009**
 QRB 501: Feb 24, 2009
***MGT 521: March 9, 2009**
 HRM 531: March 11, 2009
 ECO 561: April 7, 2009
***MGT 521: April 20, 2009**
 LAW 531: April 22, 2009

***MGT 521 is a prerequisite for all other courses**

Business-Related Concentrations Available!

Courses are 6 weeks long

Apply before the holidays and start the New Year achieving your educational goals!

For more information
 Contact
 Ed Powers
 Vilseck/Graf Representative
 DSN: 476-3605
 Com: 09662-41-6827
 Email:
 Edward.Powers@phoenix.edu

Ski the Italian Dolomites, Feb. 14-16
 • Zillertal Ski Safari, March 13-15
 Call Rose Barracks ODR at DSN 476-2563, CIV 09662-83-2563, or Graf ODR at DSN 475-7402, CIV 09641-83-7402 for information.

Babysitters certification

The American Red Cross will hold a babysitters certification course Jan 27-29 from 3:30-6 p.m.

For information call the Grafenwoehr ARC at DSN 475-1760, CIV 09641-83-1760, or in Vilseck DSN 476-1760, CIV 09662-83-1760.

Bunco

The Lagenbruck Center in Vilseck will host Winter Wonder Land Bunco Jan. 21 at 6 p.m.

Superbowl party

B.O.S.S. will host a Superbowl Party at The Zone Sports Bar Feb. 1.

VFW news

Open House each Wednesday at 6 p.m. Business meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

POC Commander, James Holliman 0160-91423858 or Sr. Vice Commander, Roger Schneider 0160-95877025.

SKIES Unlimited classes

SKIES has two new classes available for children: Gymnastics and Cooking. Contact Graf Central Registration, DSN 475-6655, CIV 09641-83-6655, or Rose Barracks, DSN: 476-2760, CIV 09662-83-2740, for information.

Instructors needed

CYS needs instructors to start new instructional programs within the SKIES Unlimited Program.

CYS is looking for instructors for piano, gymnastics, musical, self-defense, martial arts, photography, theatrical arts, dance, tutors, voice coaches or whatever your talent might be.

If you have an interest, hobby, or enjoy teaching, call Maria Maxwell at DSN 475-9392, CIV 09641-83-9392.

Bank closure

All Service Credit Union branch offices will be closed on Monday, January 19th, 2009 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

All Service Credit Union branch offices will resume normal business hours on Tuesday, January 20th, 2009.

KONTAKT Club

Check out your local KONTAKT Clubs in Grafenwoehr, Vilseck and Amberg.

The KONTAKT Club is a German-American friendship organization, sponsored by the U.S. Army that includes Soldiers, families, and other Americans supporting USAG Grafenwoehr, and German citizens from the surrounding communities.

Ask your Garrison Public Affairs Office for assistance, DSN 475-8885, CIV 09662-83-8885, or DSN 475-1600, CIV 09641-83-1600. Visit: <http://www.kontakt-vilseck.de/>.

Career Counselor needed

ACAP is looking for a career counselor for their Vilseck office. For information call DSN 476-2055, CIV 09662-83-2055 or e-mail rae.siebold@eur.army.mil.

Parent to Parent workshops

Two events will take place Jan. 25 at VHS: Creating a Student Portfolio, 2-3 p.m., and Financing College, 3-4 p.m. at VHS Multi Purpose Room.

Estates claims

Anyone leaving claims on or obligations to the estate of SSG Tim Rancore of HHC 172INF BDE should email Jason.T.Mulligan@eur.army.mil.

UMUC Spring registration

Register by Friday for On-site courses that begin 18 January.

Online course begin 26 January. Email vils@ed.umuc.edu or graf@ed.umuc.edu for information.

Employment opportunity

The Military Child Education Coalition™ is seeking individuals to provide professional workshops through the Parent to Parent TM program.

Information about this paid, part time position can be found at <http://www.militarychild.org/military-parent-parent-to-parent-parent-workshops/> or by calling 254-953-1923.

POSH training

The next EEO and POSH classroom training is scheduled for Jan. 26 from 9-10 a.m. at the Grafenwoehr EEO Office, Building 537.

Please notify the EEO office in advance at DSN 475-6390, CIV 09641-83-6390 to register for the training.

CTC Registration

Register thru Friday for the following courses:

- AUMT 1405 – Introduction to Automotive Technology (4 credit hours);
- CDEC 1335 – Early Childhood Development: 3-5 Years (3 credit hours);
- CJSA 1313 – Court Systems and Practices (3 credit hours).

Email viseck@europe.ctcd.edu for more information.

Tax time

The Grafenwoehr and Vilseck Tax Centers will open on 2 February.

Beginning Crochet

Scheduled appointments and same day appointments (walk-ins) will be available daily, with extended hours several days a week to better serve our community.

FAST Class

The Vilseck Ed. Center will be conducting a FAST Class from 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Jan. 20-30. For information or to sign up call DSN 476-2753, CIV 09662-83-2753.

Graf Tower Theater

The reopening of the Grafenwoehr Tower Theater will be delayed until at least 1 June 2009.

Hohenfels Briefs

MLK celebration

The JMRC and USAG Hohenfels community will celebrate Dr. King's legacy tomorrow with a luncheon and special presentation by Major General Anthony Jackson, USMC.

The luncheon will be held in the Garrison Dining Facility atrium from 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. All community members are invited to attend.

Maj. Gen. Jackson is currently serving as Deputy Commanding General for Operations, AFRICOM.

High School Booster Club

The next meeting of the HHS Booster Club is tomorrow at 6 p.m. in the Great Hall.

All are invited to come and help plan activities for our student athletes. For more information call Karen Cooper at 09492-601-979 or email dkck1991@hotmail.com.

BINGO at the CAC

Join the fun Friday starting at 6:30 p.m. BINGO packets are \$25 sold prior to 3 p.m. Friday, and \$30 sold at the door. There will also be a surprise giveaway.

Lane 17 Retro Night

Come Saturday and sport those old school moves to music from the 60's, 70's, 80's, & 90's with special guest DJ MCM. Only \$1.50 per game from 8-11 p.m.

Wood Shop Safety

Learn to safely use the machinery in the wood shop Saturday. Once you are certified you may come back for help on individual projects.

There is a \$10 class fee and no pre-registration is required. Wear closed toe shoes and appropriate clothing for this class, which will be held from 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Beginning Crochet

Come to class Jan. 24 and learn how

to crochet. The class will make a Granny Square and dish cloth.

Come back later to add skills or get help on your project.

Class fee is \$10 plus supplies. Bring your own hooks and yarn if you have them. Pre-register and pay at least three days before class. 9:30 a.m.-1 p.m.

Sunday Screenings

The Hohenfels Library presents its after-hours program, Sunday Screenings Jan. 25 from 4-6 p.m.

Sunday Screenings showcases independent films from around the world.

The next film, "Ben X," is a Belgium film that will be shown in Flemish with English subtitles.

Sunday Screenings is an adult only (18+) program.

Patrons are welcome to bring refreshments. Seating is limited; please contact the Library at DSN 466-1740 to reserve your seat.

Hohenfels Book Club

The Hohenfels Book Club book for January will be "Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett.

The meeting for the January book will be held Jan. 26 at 5 p.m. in the library.

For more information call the library at DSN 466-1740.

ODR one-day ski trips

Let ODR do the driving and enjoy a quick winter getaway to the Bavarian Alps for only 30 Euro.

The Winklmoosalm mountain community in Reit im Winkl, Germany, offers alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, hiking in the snow and much more.

Trips are scheduled for Jan. 24 and 31; Feb. 7 and 21; March 7, 21, 24, and 28; April 4 and 18. The 30 Euro includes transportation only.

ODR has equipment rental available for \$15 per day for adults.

For information or to make reservations call Outdoor Recreation at DSN 466-2060.

KONTAKT Club Hohenfels

The KONTAKT Club is a German-American friendship organization, sponsored by the U.S. Army that includes Soldiers, families, and other Americans supporting USAG Hohenfels, and German citizens from the surrounding communities.

The Hohenfels community is invited to participate in the Club's upcoming activities.

- Monthly Stammtisch Jan. 21 at Josef's Tavern in Hohenfels, 7 p.m.
- Ice skating in Regensburg Jan. 24.

Meet at the Schlossstättkapelle in Hohenfels at 1:15 p.m. Bus departs at 1:30 p.m.

- Line Dancing Jan. 30 at the RAC at 7 p.m.

For more information or directions to the events call the Public Affairs Office at DSN 466-4294, or visit the club's website at www.kontakt-hohenfels.com.

Netzaberg Town Hall

TONIGHT

6 p.m.

Netzaberg Middle School Multi-Purpose Room
 (enter through Netzaberg Middle School Entrance)

This will be a special town hall for residents living in Government housing (leased or private) located in the city of Eschenbach, to include Netzaberg housing area. The USAG Grafenwoehr Garrison Commander and the Mayor of Eschenbach will present information and address the questions and concerns of residents residing

Community Spotlight

What's Happening

Ansbach
Briefs

PX grand opening

AAFES officials will host a grand opening of the renovated post exchange on Bismarck Kaserne tomorrow at 10 a.m. For more, call the PX at DSN 467-2023 or CIV 09802-95-8510.

Shoppette hours

AAFES shoppettes on Barton Barracks and Shipton Kaserne have new hours until further notice.

The Barton Shoppette is now open Mondays-Fridays from 7 a.m.-2 p.m., and is closed Saturdays and Sundays.

The Shipton Shoppette is open Mondays-Fridays from 11 a.m.-6 p.m., and is closed Saturdays and Sundays.

Rental car fuel cards

U.S. forces personnel who rent cars are eligible to get tax-free fuel cards for use with the vehicles, report Ansbach U.S. Customs officials.

To get authorized to receive a short-term fuel ration card, bring the rental agreement and the German vehicle registration certificate (Fahrzeugschein) to the U.S. Customs Office on Barton Barracks in Bldg. 5254, Room 316 during normal duty hours.

After 4 p.m. or on weekends or holidays, the form can be picked up at the Ansbach Military Police Station in Bldg. 5257 on Barton Barracks.

At Storck Barracks, people can get the form at the MP station during and after duty hours.

For more, call Ansbach's U.S. Customs-Europe Field Office at DSN 468-7847, CIV 0981-183-847.

GOV fuel coupons

Fuel card usage for government non-tactical vehicles has arrived. The government fuel cards are imprinted with the vehicle tag number and are not moved between vehicles. The cards can be used by any eligible driver of the assigned vehicle.

The fuel cards are issued with a vehicle registration document and an assigned personal identification number to be used when purchasing fuel. The cards can be used to buy diesel and gasoline.

Instructions on usage will be given upon issue of the card. For more information on the government vehicle fuel cards, call DSN 468-7755, CIV 0981-183-755.

Ice Skating

Outdoor recreations offers a trip to the ice skating rink in Nuremberg Jan. 22. Transportation is free. The bus leaves the Storck Theater at 8 a.m. and Katterbach Outdoor Recreation at 9 a.m.

Sign up in advance for the family-friendly trip by calling DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Texas Hold 'Em clinic

Action Lanes on Katterbach offers people the chance to learn to play Texas Hold 'Em poker Jan. 25 from 3-6 p.m.

The event is designed to teach people how to play the game or give them some

practice to get ready for the big Texas Hold 'Em tournament in February. For more, send an e-mail to ans-mwr@eur.army.mil.

FRG forums

ACS hosts Family Readiness Group forums at the yellow ribbon rooms at Storck Barracks Jan. 26 and Katterbach Jan. 28. The forums will focus on working through relationships after a deployment and they are open to the public.

Both forums are 10 a.m. to noon on their respective days.

For more, call DSN 467-4397, CIV 09841-83-4397 at Storck, and DSN 467-2553, CIV 09802-83-2553 at Katterbach.

Ski Austria

Outdoor recreation hosts a Martin Luther King Ski Trip to the Ski Amade Region of Austria Jan. 16-19. Cost for the trip is \$309 per person for a three-night stay, breakfast, dinner, transportation and a guide.

Sign up in advance by calling DSN 467-3225, CIV 09802-83-3225.

Newcomers orientation

ACS hosts free newcomers orientation, People Encouraging People, Jan. 20-21 from 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Katterbach ACS.

Newcomers and those just looking for community information are welcomed to attend the event that features briefs from community managers, short tours of local cities and trips to local hospitals.

For more, call DSN 467-2883, CIV 09802-83-2883.

Free concert

The Longbow Lounge on Storck Barracks hosts a free concert Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. featuring the band Virginia Coalition. Tickets are available at the Katterbach and Storck Barracks bowling centers. For more on the concert, send an e-mail to ans-mwr@eur.army.mil.

Stretch that dollar

Want to get more from your dollar? Check out the Storck Barracks and Katterbach Yellow Ribbon rooms. Both keep a "huge" selection of manufacturers coupons, said ACS officials, adding that the coupons are good for up to six months past their expiration date.

For more on the free coupons, stop by the YRRs or call the Storck facility at DSN 467-4397, CIV 09841-83-4397, or Katterbach at DSN 467-2553, CIV 09802-83-2553.

Crafty children

The Katterbach and Storck Barracks Yellow Ribbon rooms host children's crafts every Tuesday from 3-4 p.m. The crafts offer parents a free activity, and a chance to spend an hour one-on-one with their children. Supplies, crafts and instruction are provided.

For more, call the Storck YRR at DSN 467-4397, CIV 09841-83-4397, or the Katterbach YRR at DSN 467-2553, CIV 09802-83-2553.

Clinic hours

The Katterbach Health Clinic is now open Thursdays from 7:30 a.m.-12:30

p.m. It is closed in the afternoon for training. For more, call DSN 467-3398, CIV 09802-83-3398.

Road closure

The airfield bypass road on Katterbach is now closed Mondays-Fridays (except for holidays) from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to allow units to conduct physical training.

Military police officials warn people not to try to move the barricades and drive on the road during that time.

For more, call DSN 468-1580, CIV 0981-183-1580.

Schweinfurt
Briefs

Teen Trip

Club Beyond invites all teens to join a weekend of escape to Bitburg, Germany Feb. 13-16. Youth from various military communities will gather together to enjoy a guest speaker, games, singing, and more. To register for the escape weekend, call CIV 0175-666-3339 before Friday.

Women's Bible studies

Protestant Women of the Chapel welcomes all women of the community to join a small group Bible study at Ledward Chapel Wednesday mornings at 9 a.m. Free childcare is provided, as well as snacks, and rides are available. Find friendship, fellowship, and God. For information call, 0170-277-8980.

Prolong vehicle life

Come to the Auto Skills Center at 2 p.m. on the follow dates to learn about your own vehicle and how to tell if mechanics are overcharging. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-8224, DSN 353-8224.

- Jan. 29 - Preventive Maintenance
- Prolong the life and reliability of your auto

- Feb. 12 - Auto Skills Equipment Orientation

Learn how to safely use shop tools for do-it-yourself maintenance

- Feb. 26 - Vehicle Passive Restraints

How do air bags work? Is your child safely secured? Worry no more

Men's basketball tourney

Play in the next community men's basketball tournament Jan. 25 at Finney Fitness Center. Deadline to register is Jan. 21.

Tournament is open to the first four teams, ID card holders age 18 or over and not in high school. T-shirts are given to all and awards will be given to first and second place teams. Games begin at 11 a.m.

Register through email at william.comeford@eur.army.mil or tony.pus-korius@eur.army.mil.

Learn about King Jr.

In honor of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, the Ledward library will feature a display with books, bibliographies, web-ographies and more. Stop by between Sunday and Jan. 25 to check your knowledge on the Civil Rights

THE TIME

FILL OUT A
SURVEY
TODAY

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OR AT SELECTED
LOCATIONS

★ WWW.AFNEUROPE.NET ★

GO TO AFNEUROPE.NET AND CLICK THE LINK FOR THE SURVEY.

Complete the survey and be automatically entered to win a 3-night stay for two at the

Edelweiss Lodge and Resort in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.

Package includes a 1-day ski or snowboard lesson for two adults, plus rental equipment and lift passes!

Movement and enter a quiz. For information, call CIV 09721-96-1740, DSN 354-1740.

Spring soccer registration

Registration for youth soccer is now open to ages 3 to 15. Cost is \$25 for ages 3 to 5 and \$36 for ages 6 to 15. Registration ends Feb. 13. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-8234, DSN 354-8234.

Adult book club

The community is invited to attend the adult book club at Ledward library on the last Thursday of each month. The next meeting is Jan. 29 at 5:15 p.m. to discuss, "The City of Fallen Angels," by John Berendt. Coffee, tea, and treats will be served. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-6487, DSN 354-6487.

Bank Open on Saturdays

The Schweinfurt branch of Andrews Federal Credit Union is now open the first and third Saturdays of each month. Stop by to do your business 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Shoppette holiday hours

The Conn Barracks shoppette and gas pumps will be open from 8 a.m.-8 p.m. on all federal holidays beginning Jan. 19.

Health clinic closed

The Schweinfurt Health Clinic will be closed Friday and Monday for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday.

In case of an emergency, Leopoldina should be your first option at CIV 09721-7200. The emergency room is open 24 hours and is well staffed to diagnose, treat, and admitted if need be. Leopoldina will be directed to follow up with your primary care manager.

Shop for crystal

Sign up with B.O.S.S. by Jan. 21 to take a crystal shopping trip to Czech Republic Jan. 31 - Feb. 1. Bus drives while you sleep. For information, call CIV 09721-96-8476, DSN 354-8476.

Night ski

Sign up to go night skiing in Wassenberg, Rhoen with Outdoor Recreation this month.

Depending on snow conditions ODR will take a trip each Thursday from 5 p.m. to approximately 11 p.m. Cost is \$25 which includes transportation and equipment rental or \$15 without rental. To sign up, call CIV 09721-96-8080, DSN 353-8080.

Babysitter certification

Youth ages 12 to 18 can get themselves prepared by becoming a certi-

fied babysitter through Child, Youth, and School Services' three-day class scheduled to take place over the schools' spring break in April.

Prospective babysitters will receive instruction on CPR, first aid, and more. Upon completion of the training, youth will be put on the community babysitters list.

Parents can pick up forms at central registration in the Commons. For information, call CIV 09721-96-6414, DSN 354-6414.

Free computer classes

ACS is offering free computer classes. Classes run from 8 a.m.-12:50 p.m. in Ledward bldg. 206 computer lab. A certificate of completion will be issued at the end of each class. For more information, call ACS at CIV 09721-96-6933, DSN 354-6933.

- Tomorrow - Basic web design
- Jan. 26 - Basic MS Excel I
- Jan. 27 - Basic MS Excel II
- Jan. 28 - Power Point
- Jan. 29 - Intro to MS Access

Socialize at the Lunch Bunch

Join Schweinfurt's Lunch Bunch Jan. 22 from 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Sign up for the carpool or call to get directions to the restaurant at DSN 354-6933, CIV 09721-96-6933.

Experience a little of the German culture with an English-speaking guide to help you translate the menu. Children are welcome! Bring euro for lunch.

Inauguration Day

Watch live on television the formal induction of Barack Obama into U.S. presidential office at the Ledward Library Jan. 20 starting at 6 p.m. For more information, call CIV 09721-96-1740, DSN 354-1740.

Lunch & learn

Bring your lunch to the Ledward library Jan. 22 from 12-1 p.m. and learn about free downloadable audio books available through the Army libraries page on AKO. For information, call DSN 354-1740, CIV 09721-96-1740.

B.O.S.S. wants your input

Want to help plan events for single Soldiers or just give your input into how things run?

Attend Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers' council meeting on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month.

The next meeting is Jan. 27 and all single Soldiers are invited to attend. The meeting is held at Finney Recreation Center at 2 p.m.

For more information, call CIV 09721-96-8476, DSN 353-8476.

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a look back at

2008

The Berchtesgaden National Park (right), on the Austrian border, was explored in the May 21 Bavarian News. The Trevi Fountain (below) and the landmarks of Rome were revealed April 23.



Courtesy Photo



Photo by Dawn Lyn



Photo by Senior Airman Justin Weaver



Photo by Spc. Crystal Abbott

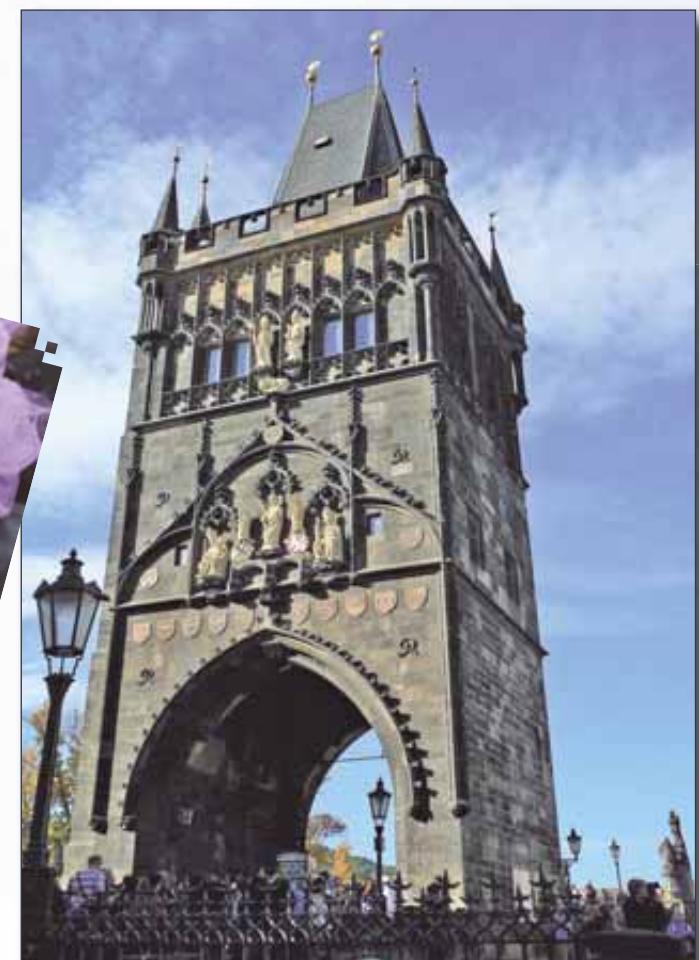


Photo by Lou Stagger



Photo by Dan Wilson



Photo by Robert Hertz

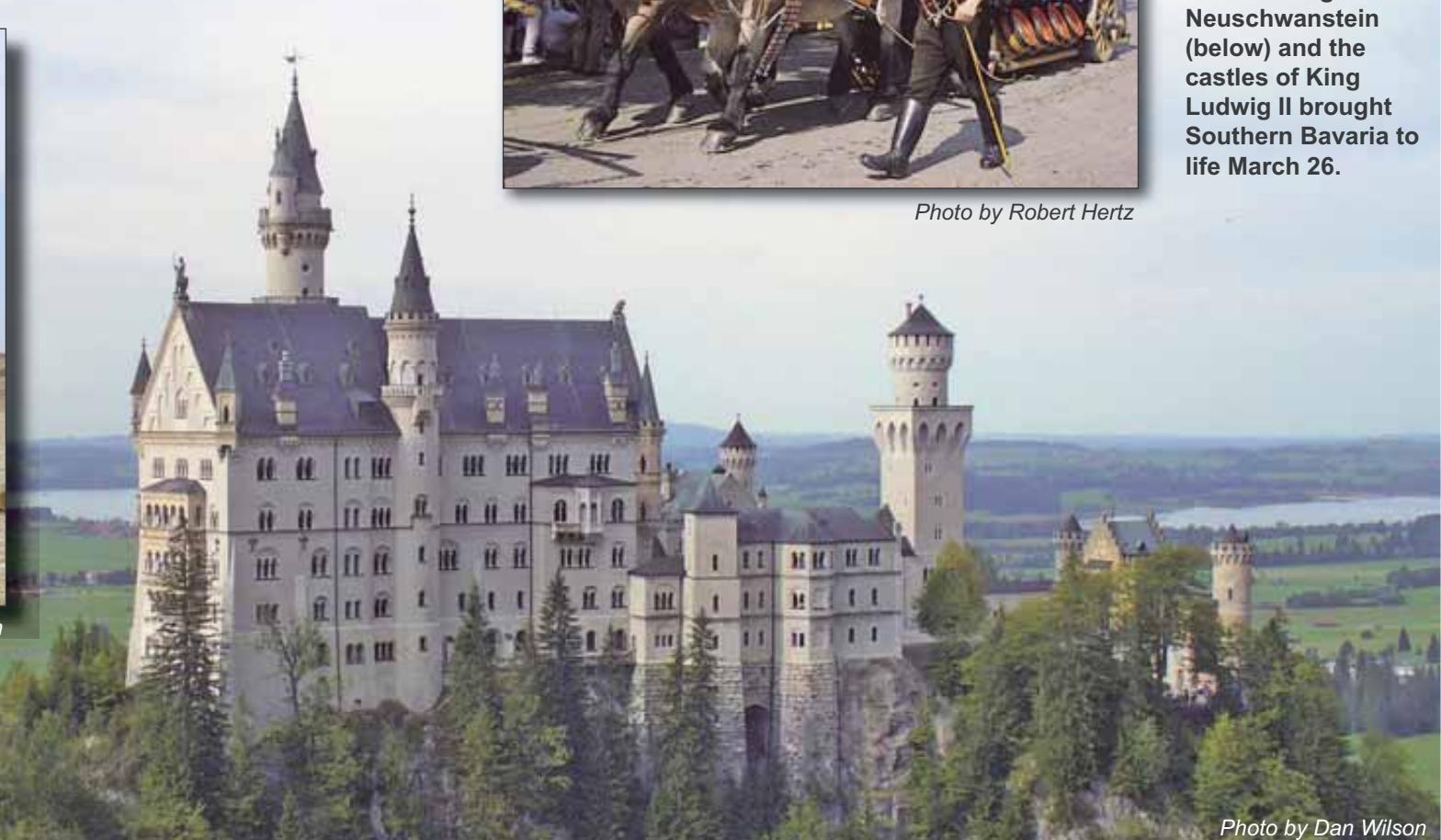


Photo by Dan Wilson

Highlighted on Oct. 15, the Charles Bridge Gate in Prague (above) is a dominant and beautiful site in the "Golden City." Octoberfest (left), featured in the Sept. 17 issue, draws tourists from around the globe. Neuschwanstein (below) and the castles of King Ludwig II brought Southern Bavaria to life March 26.

Bavaria MEDDAC transforms in '08

by Capt.
JERRY D. VANVACTOR

Chief of Logistics, Bavaria MEDDAC

Beginning in 2006, a significant transformation began related to the restationing of medical troops throughout Germany.

With the return of the First Infantry Division Headquarters to CONUS and the deactivation of the 67th Combat Support Hospital, the Wuerzburg Army Hospital, a direct-report unit to the Europe Regional Medical Command, began reducing service and preparing for imminent closure.

Service reduction began with the deactivation of Wuerzburg Army Hospital's inpatient wards, surgical,

well-baby, labor and delivery, and emergency services. Specialty care, such as OB/GYN, pediatrics, radiology, neurology, orthopedics and oncology, is now provided by a network of German 376 health care physicians supported by 21 local hospitals in the footprint.

Following those reductions, ancillary services in external locations such as Kitzingen, Giebelstadt, and Garmisch also began to close.

Finally, the core processes of the inpatient facility closed and relocated onto Leighton Barracks as the keys to the 70-year-old facility that was operated by U.S. forces since 1945 were returned to the government of Germany in October of 2007.

Throughout the transition period,

the headquarters followed a unit movement plan that was facilitated by an internal transition synchronization team.

The team, comprised of eleven members representative of multiple functions of the headquarters, was responsible for overseeing a renovation project inside the current headquarters building, the movement of all personnel, equipment, and operations, and the re-establishment of all processes related to the management of health care throughout Bavaria.

From the end of 2007 and into 2008, the Bavaria MEDDAC continued to transition from an inpatient hospital service-based organization to an outpatient ambulatory health

network-based headquarters with command and control responsibilities over seven U.S. Army Health Clinics throughout Bavaria supporting 40,000 patients.

The health clinics are located in Bamberg, Grafenwoehr, Hohenfels, Illesheim, Katterbach, Schweinfurt and Vilseck. The clinics are capable of providing urgent care, routine care, wellness exams, physical therapy, optometry, audiology and behavioral health.

Around September of 2008, the final act of the transformation played out as the Bavaria MEDDAC colors were removed from Leighton Barracks in Wuerzburg as one of the final tenants of the installation and the base was set for closure.

For most Soldiers and family members in the Bavaria footprint, the headquarters move was transparent and did not affect the delivery of quality medical and dental care at the clinic level.

Approximately 120 BMEDDAC employees and their family members now make Vilseck and the surrounding area their home. The Bavaria MEDDAC Headquarters was relocated to Bldg. 700 at Vilseck Rose Barracks.

The Bavaria MEDDAC Headquarters staff is commanded by Col. Theresa M. Schneider. She is supported by the deputy commanders and their personnel that oversee clinic services, nursing, and the administrative functions of BMEDDAC.

Disrupted sleep common after deployment

by Maj. RICHARD BARTON

U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine

When returning from deployment, a common contributor to feeling out of sorts is disrupted sleep.

Living conditions in theater are not exactly four star; deployment sounds like air frames zipping overhead, opening and closing doors, weapons being slung and un-slung, and roommates shouting over video games—all with the possibility of incoming rounds—are a poor formula for solid siestas.

For Soldiers just returning from deployment, the living conditions during can negatively impact sleep.

For some it is a lack of those sounds, for others it is sounds that are similar and appear to be out of place at home, and for those lucky enough to be within earshot of an impact area,

well, enough said.

A trick to improving sleep is controlling the things you can and recognizing those that you cannot. Move the TV to a viewing place that is not the bedroom. This will help your body and mind begin to identify your bed as a place for sleep.

If you are having problems staying asleep, go to another room and sit while watching TV or reading until you are ready to sleep. This sequence may have to be repeated several times, but eventually your body will get the message.

Set up a sleeping SOP that cues your body into recognizing when it is time to sleep. If needed, cover your eyes to keep light out. Use ear plugs or earphones with relaxing music. Relaxation exercises and martial arts meditation have been proven to be very effective in resetting sleep patterns.

Soldiers attend field training partly to become effective at functioning with low levels of sleep

under adverse conditions.

These training events cannot simulate adverse conditions such as the impact of near-death experiences, the witnessing of carnage, or the loss of a brother in arms. Over the last 15 years, sleep research has confirmed links between exposure to combat and sleep difficulties. In other words, poor sleep while deployed or upon return is normal.

Taking steps to learn about and then apply sleep hygiene procedures may be all that is needed to reset the process for restful sleep. If the body and mind are rested, their ability to deal with combat reactions improves markedly.

Help your body by restricting caffeine and nicotine intake an hour or two before sleeping. Don't use alcohol to manage sleep—it creates short-term, false gains with long-term negative impact. Studies have consistently shown that overuse of alcohol disrupts sleep. They have also demonstrated that a common denominator

for those who suffer from severe PTSD is the use of alcohol, resulting in prolonged sleep difficulties.

If after 120 days of postdeployment, you see no significant improvements in sleep or no decrease in combat reactions, seek assistance from your primary-care provider, from another healthcare professional or a behavioral health specialist. Any of these resources should be able point you in the right direction.

Good resources for information include:

- Sleep Education.com, www.sleepeducation.com
- National Institute of Mental Health, <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/>
- National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, <http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp>, and
- Military One Source, www.militaryonesource.com.

Monitor symptoms, prevent common cause of bronchiolitis

BMEDDAC Public Affairs

What is Respiratory Syncytial Virus?

RSV is a virus that usually causes respiratory illness in children under 2 years of age and adults over age 65 and occurs primarily from November through April.

RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia in children under 1 year of age in the United States.

Almost all children are infected with the virus by their second birthday, but only a small percentage develop severe disease.

Symptoms are similar to the common cold, but RSV can progress to pneumonia, so it is important to monitor these symptoms in babies and young toddlers.

Symptoms

The illness typically begins 4 to 6 days after exposure with a runny nose and decreased appetite. Coughing, sneezing, and fever typically develop 1 to 3 days later.

In very young infants, irritability, decreased activity, and breathing difficulties may be the only symptoms of infection.

Most otherwise healthy infants infected with RSV do not require hospitalization, and in most cases, including among those who need to be hospitalized, full recovery occurs in about 1 to 2 weeks.

How does the virus spread?

RSV is often brought into the home by school-aged children and can be rapidly transmitted to other members of the family. RSV can be spread from coughing or sneezing by an infected person. Droplets can linger briefly in the air, and if someone inhales the particles or the particles contact their nose, mouth, or eye, they can become infected.

Infection can also result from direct and indirect contact from infected persons, such as kissing the face of a child with RSV or if the virus gets on an environmental surface, such as a doorknob, that is then touched by other people.

Direct and indirect transmissions

of virus usually occur when people touch an infectious secretion and then rub their eyes or nose. RSV can survive on hard surfaces such as tables and crib rails for many hours. RSV typically lives on soft surfaces such as tissues and hands for shorter amounts of time.

People infected with RSV are usually contagious for 3 to 8 days. However, some infants and people with weakened immune systems can be contagious for as long as 4 weeks.

Premature infants, children less than 2 years of age with congenital heart or chronic lung disease, adults and children with compromised (weakened) immune systems due to a medical condition or medical treatment are at highest risk for severe disease.

Prevention

Prevention is based in cleanliness. Cover all coughs and sneezes. Teach children to cough into their sleeve/elbow or into a tissue not into their hands.

Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at 15-20 seconds.

Because the virus can survive on surfaces it is important to keep things clean.

Counters and door knobs and other surfaces should be cleaned with disinfectant or just hot soapy water. Avoid sharing cups and eating utensils.

RSV is most common from November to April so it would be wise to keep babies and people with poor immune systems away from crowds. If a school age child becomes ill with cold symptoms, you should explain how germs are spread by droplets and touch and encourage them to avoid holding and kissing any younger children or babies until they are better.

A drug called palivizumab (pronounced "pah-lih-VIH-zu-mah") or Synagis is available to prevent severe RSV illness in certain infants and children who are at high risk. The drug can help prevent development of serious RSV disease, but it cannot help cure or treat children already suffering from serious RSV disease and it cannot prevent infection with RSV.

If your child is at high risk, talk to your healthcare provider to see if palivizumab or Synagis can be used as a preventive measure. Researchers are working to develop RSV vaccines, but none is available yet.

When to see a healthcare provider

Visits to a healthcare provider for an RSV infection are very common. Contact your local health clinic if your child is displaying the following symptoms: wheezing, coughing that wakes up the child, pain when coughing, difficulty breathing (baby's head moves with each breath), high persistent fever, ear pain, multiple episodes of vomiting, irritability, atypical behavior, excessive sleeping, decrease in wet diapers or intake of fluids.

There is no specific treatment other than the care of symptoms, but the physician will determine the best care plan for your child. Your doctor can give advice on how to make people with RSV infection more comfortable and assess whether hospitalization is needed.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:

The Vilseck clinic will close 30 minutes early (at 5:30 p.m.) tomorrow due to a joint American German Medical Education Meeting taking place at Amberg.



Practice makes perfect at BMEDDAC!

Soldiers at Bavaria MEDDAC Headquarters in Vilseck practice the crucial skill of initiating an IV. Staff Sgt. Amin A. Brimah (left) and Sgt. Roger T. Shields (right) instruct Staff Sgt. Douglas K. Porter to initiate the infusion as Sgt. Ramon H. James acts as a patient.

Photo courtesy of BMEDDAC

Garrison earns Army entertainment awards

by JIM HUGHES
Ansbach Public Affairs Officer

If awards are any indication, then USAG Ansbach is making a name for itself as the entertainment capital of the Army.

Ansbach racked up 21 awards from the U.S. Army Festival of the Performing Arts Competition held in Baltimore in November for its hosting of the 2008 Installation Management Command-Europe Best of the Best Talent Show in July, said Jenny Sullivan, Ansbach recreation specialist who attended the festival.

Garrison-level awards included first place Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers Variety show, second place in the youth talent competition, third place in the scrapbook competition and third place in the overall garrison category.

The individual awards are close hold for now—they will be revealed at an awards ceremony Jan. 28 at 6 p.m. at the Terrace Playhouse on Bleidorn Housing Area. The event will also feature an unveiling of plans for the 2009 Europe-Wide Best of the Best Talent Show that will once again be hosted by Ansbach May 30.

Sullivan, who also runs the local BOSS program, was initially a bit taken aback by Ansbach's success.

"This was the first time that Europe was included in the festival, so it was our first time competing," she said. "At the festival, we just kept winning and winning, and I kept going up there and shaking hands."

At the festival, we just kept winning and winning and I kept going up there and shaking hands.

Jenny Sullivan
Ansbach Recreational Specialist

In addition to judging Ansbach's hosting of the event, the talent, from several Europe installations including Ansbach, who participated in the Best of the Best were judged locally and also judged against talent from all over the world at the festival and were included in the awards, Sullivan said.

Winning the awards may have come as a

surprise, but the work that went into putting on the show was extensive, Sullivan said.

About 30 people, including 26 volunteers largely made up of BOSS members, worked for weeks to prepare for the show. The show featured the theme "The Grammies" and included awards that were LPs gathered from the community and painted gold like the annual awards in the music industry.

While all of the workers and talent were important to the event's success, Sullivan said one stood out.

"Vikki Hanrahan is one reason we won so many awards," she said. "What I had imagined and thought possible was limited, but she showed me what we could do, what we needed and how to get there. Without her knowledge, we couldn't have done what we did. She's amazing."

Sullivan also cited command support as a reason Ansbach dominated the awards.

"We get great support from our commander—Colonel Hickey (Col. Christopher M. Hickey, commander of the garrison) is supportive of all of our events, comes to all of our events and is always eager to do whatever we need him to do."

Ansbach gets to do it again—and relatively soon, Sullivan said.

"We'll have the judges back for a Terrace Playhouse production of 'Lucky Stiff,' and also for the 2009 IMCOM-Europe Best of the Best Talent Show May 30," she said. "This year's theme for Best of the Best is 'Casino.' We're going to decorate and have people in costumes again—that's one of the areas the judges look at it—if you can you give the event that aura."

Ansbach's entertainment experts are asking all Army installations in Europe to hold feeder competitions and to send their best talent to the IMCOM-E show to compete among the Best of the Best to help keep Army Europe entertainment



Erika Chester, an Ansbach military community member, during a dance routine during the Installation Management Command-Europe Best of the Best Talent Show in July of 2008.

firmly on the map.

"We had four installations in 2008 and we hope to at least double that in 2009," she said.

People who attend the awards ceremony at Bleidorn will be the first to get the details on the 2009 Best of the Best Talent Show and also find out all about the award winners from Ansbach and the other installations who took part in the 2008 show.

For more on entertainment at Ansbach or the BOSS program, call Sullivan at DSN 467-2929 or CIV 09802-83-2929.

Free tax services currently available

by MELISSA INMAN
Ansbach Tax Assistance

The tax assistance centers on Katterbach and Storck Barracks will offer free tax help and filing services starting Feb. 2.

The tax centers will open to the eligible members of the Ansbach community for the 2009 filing season Feb. 2 so they can file their 2008 returns.

For those who may have missed filing due to deployments, taxpayers will also be able to file 2007 and 2006 returns.

If you were unable to file your taxes last year and missed out on the economic stimulus payment, you should be able to receive your payment in the form of a "Recovery Rebate Credit" on your 2008 return.

Both offices will be closed the entire month of January to allow the staff to attend critical training with the IRS. The first few weeks of the new year is a great time for taxpayers to ensure they have all of their necessary documents to file their taxes before coming to the tax centers. If you are expecting a refund, you'll be pleased by the ease of electronic filing and a quick deposit directly into your bank account.

U.S. taxpayers living overseas on April 15 have until June 15 to file their tax returns. However, if you are among those who owe money, the IRS charges interest on any amount owed starting April 15.

Additionally, filers who have not paid at least 90 percent of their taxes by April 15 may also owe a late penalty.

Starting Feb. 2, the tax centers will be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. with walk-in and appointment times available.

Contact the tax centers for more information about filing your federal and state returns:

* Katterbach Tax Center—DSN 467-2324, CIV 09802-83-2324

* Storck Barracks Tax Center—DSN 467-4511, CIV 09841-83-4511.

Ansbach honors deployed Soldiers, wins civilian agency award in the process

Story and photo by
RONALD H. TOLAND Jr
Bavarian News

People took notice when the Ansbach military community came together to show its love and support for its deployed Soldiers.

Ansbach earned top honors in community service from a civilian non-profit organization for its unofficial Department of Defense record-breaking largest yellow ribbon formation in May.

The Learning Resource Network, a non-profit that provides recreation programming training and Web-based program sharing, announced Ansbach as the winner of its Best Community Service Award, according to a LERN press release.

"With almost 80 percent of Ansbach Soldiers being deployed, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation program decided to host an event to

show community support for the spouses and children of deployed Soldiers, weary from the separation and stress caused by the long deployment," said Bill Draves, LERN's president, during the awards luncheon at its International Conference in San Francisco in November. "Country singer Granger Smith gave a free concert, free T-shirts were given to the first 1,000 people and then some 1,385 people formed a large human yellow ribbon."

Ansbach FMWR officials are, of course, thrilled with the recognition, but are quick to let everyone know a lot of people share in the award, said Dan Riley, FMWR director.

"LERN is a prestigious organization in

the field of special events planning, and it is an exceptional honor to be recognized in a nationwide competition with public and private sector organizations," said Riley. "The beauty of the award is that it honors the great community effort that went into assembling Ansbach's record-breaking yellow ribbon."

Jenny Sullivan, Ansbach recreation specialist and one of the main organizers of the event added that before her arrival, a community spouse's focus group came up with the idea. Being the special events coordinator for the garrison, Sullivan was tasked to carry out the plan.

"The community really embraced the idea once it was presented to them," she said. "But we did not expect the overwhelming numbers. Even our regional staff came and participated—it was all about community camaraderie and something participants will talk about for a long time to come."

And this award says a lot for the first-time winners.

"The USAG Ansbach FMWR program has never won this before and it really puts the whole community on the map," Sullivan said. "Receiving national recognition from a civilian organization—we were the only Army event that placed at all—so we won against other major civilian organizations like colleges and city, state and government recreation programs who also submitted for the award."

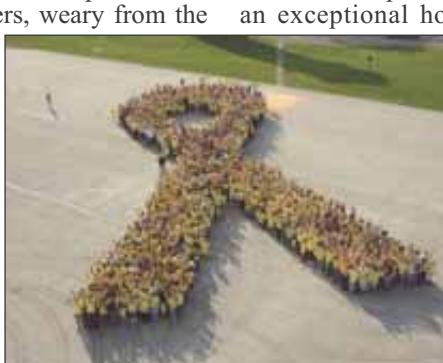
Sullivan added that doing something like this shows Ansbach setting benchmarks and becoming a flagship community.

"It shows that we have done something new and innovative that got recognized—as opposed to following trends and not setting them."

The record was previously held by Marine Corps Air Station Miramar with about 800 participants.



(Above) Community members line up just prior to forming up to set an unofficial Department of Defense record for largest yellow ribbon formation in May. (Inset) The end result: the unofficial Department of Defense record-breaking largest yellow ribbon formation.



Courtesy photo

12th CAB under new leadership

Col. Robert C. Doerer took command of U.S. Army Europe's 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, known as the Griffin Brigade, in a change-of-command ceremony Jan. 9 at Katterbach Army Airfield. Doerer assumed command from Col. Timothy J. Edens. READ THE JAN. 28 ISSUE FOR THE FULL STORY.

a look back at 2008



Photo by Jim Hughes

Col. Timothy Edens, commander of the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, leads a formation of Griffin Soldiers into Hangar 2 during a welcome home ceremony on Katterbach Kaserne in late September.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Ansbach Cougar junior quarterback Dominic Barrale plows over the goal line, with help from what was described as a dominant offensive line, for another score in an early-season game against Aviano in September. The Cougars devastated all opponents on their way to their sixth championship in seven years.



Courtesy photo

Members of the Ansbach High School cheerleader team perform during the Department of Defense Dependent Schools Cheerleading Championships at Manheim Feb. 23. The team out-cheered all its competition in Division II to earn the championship. Tiffany Heard and Brianna Newby from Ansbach were named to the DODDS-E All-Tournament Team.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Scott Stapp, former lead vocalist for the rock band Creed and now solo artist, belts out the vocals as bassist Zelick and guitarist Alex Bodnar rock out during a free concert in October in a Katterbach hangar. Stapp and his band performed for the Ansbach community thanks to a joint tour courtesy of Navy and Armed Forces Entertainment.



Photo by Ronald H. Toland Jr.

On the evening of May 14, 1,385 Soldiers, family members, civilians, and local nationals of the Ansbach military community set the unofficial Armed Forces record for the largest yellow ribbon formation at the Storck Barracks Airfield. The previous record was set by the Marines at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Calif., in October 2005. Neither record is registered with Guinness World Records. Family Morale, Welfare and Recreation staff handed out free yellow T-shirts to event participants.



Courtesy photo

Sgt. Enrique Ramos-Melendez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Task Force XII in Iraq, gives his seal of approval after opening a box of recreational equipment sent to deployed 12th Combat Aviation Brigade Soldiers to by USAG Ansbach Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation in April. FMWR sent the kits to express its appreciation for that the Soldiers do and to also continue its mission of supporting recreational needs of service members no matter where they go.



Martina Fullen helps her son, Jeremiah, 28 months, maneuver a go-kart through a track set up at the USAG Ansbach Morale, Welfare and Recreation Month of the Military Child celebration in April on Katterbach Kaserne. Hundreds of community youth took in loads of fun including video games, rides, playgrounds, go-karts, a petting zoo, face painting a fashion show where children from the community showed off the AAFES 2008 apparel line and much more.

Photo by Jim Hughes



Photo by Detlef Szillat

Col. Christopher Hickey accepts the USAG Ansbach colors from Diane Devens, Installation Management Command-Europe director, as he assumes command of the garrison in June.



Photo by Jim Hughes

Scott Marko, Katterbach Fitness Center, and Dan Riley, Ansbach FMWR director, work around the fitness center and commissary during a volunteer base beautification day in September. One of Col. Christopher Hickey's goals after taking command of the garrison was to redesign Ansbach installations—and the first step is cleanup. There is an ongoing committee working on design and beautification—to make Ansbach into Your Army Home.

Wounded warrior overcomes adversity, prepares for Iraq

Story and photo by
EMILY ATHENS
Bavarian News

Danger lurks on every stretch of road in Iraq with the prospect of Improvised Explosive Devices.

These roadside bombs have taken a terrible toll on those serving downrange, and Spc. Jake Altman knows very well the destruction they can cause.

After serving two years in the Army, Altman deployed in 2006 for his

first time in Operation Iraqi Freedom with 9th Engineer Battalion, Bravo Company, stationed just north of Baghdad at Camp Taji.

"Altman was hard-working. He was self-assured, and got along with everyone," said Spc. Jason Ogarro of Altman's attitude while downrange.

Sgt. Corey Blatchford, friend of Altman's since they were stationed together in Bamberg, agrees that Altman was an eager worker in Iraq and pushed himself as far as a Soldier should.



Spc. Jake Altman
prepares to return to Iraq this month, three years after losing his right arm in an IED explosion.

However, five months into the deployment, on the morning of May 14, 2007, Altman's life changed.

"I remember him coming in, and he actually said to me 'I don't feel well today.' He actually felt like something wasn't right," Blatchford said.

Altman left on a route clearance mission that morning, operating a Husky, a single-occupant vehicle equipped to detect mines.

"I was the lead vehicle scouting for IEDs and letting the guys behind me know what's up ahead. About three hours into it, I came across one. I saw it for about a split second. I called it, and then all of a sudden it blew up..." Altman said, trailing off.

A piercing bang, the harsh smell of explosives, and an overwhelming cloud of dust proved the unfortunate success of yet another insurgent attack.

As a result of the blast, Altman suffered severe shrapnel wounds to his legs and the loss of his right arm at the elbow.

Immediately after the explosion, Altman tried desperately to smash his M16 through the glass window, so he could get out of the vehicle, but he was unsuccessful because of space limitations and injuries.

"I was awake through the entire ordeal. I was completely conscious. There was a lot of pain and a lot of anger," he said.

Although in tremendous pain and agony, Altman could not help but think what only heroes perceive during this type of emergency.

"I was actually glad it was me. If I would have missed it, it would've hit a truck full of guys. That explosion would have killed everybody in the truck," he said.

Despite any initial frustrations, Altman has come to terms with his wounds and has vowed to "keep pushing through it."

After a year and a half of recovery and physical therapy at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, Altman returned to the

9th EN Bn in Schweinfurt, continuing his service and eager to take on future challenges.

Furthermore, he has decided to deploy once again, and will readily depart this month, fulfilling his desire to "stay in the fight."

"Personally I want to do this for myself. I'm not proving it to anybody else that I can do this. I'm doing it just for me," he said.

Remaining in the military was not an easy undertaking for Altman, Ogarro explained. After several attempts, Altman finally spoke to the right people and was allowed to continue his service.

"I've had to fight to stay in the military because this is what I want to do. I don't really feel impaired. I can always find a way around it," he said, noting his quick adjustment to his injuries.

The dexterity of Altman's prosthetic limits him to grabbing things, closing,

and rotating his new hand.

The ability to twist his prosthetic hand completely around is a talent that he finds useful when he wants to "mess with people," he explained with a smile, demonstrating that although he lost a hand, he did not lose his spirit.

"He's had a good sense of humor before and after. That's something he definitely didn't lose," Ogarro said, remembering a specific incident.

"I asked him to give me a hand, and I knew I set myself up. He popped it off and gave it to me," Ogarro said, laughing.

Altman's experiences and continued determination

have become a motivation for other Soldiers.

"It shows the other Soldiers that even if you have something happen, you still can come down and fight hard and still defend your country."

"It's courageous ... if he can do it without an arm, why can't I do it with two arms," Blatchford said.

Without regrets or resentment, Altman looks forward to the years ahead of service.

"I am a little nervous, but I want this," Altman said about going back to Iraq. "The military really is for me."



Teens to gain perspective with service project

by SANDRA WILSON
Bavarian News

With the new year under the belt, the last thing you may be thinking about is what to do over spring break. But now is the time, because deposits are due this month for a "life-changing experience."

Club Beyond's service project to Czech Republic takes place April 3-10 and interested high school students need to sign up now with their \$100 deposit.

As many as 800 teens travel from throughout Europe to service projects, sponsored by Club Beyond and Malachi Ministries, located in Slovakia, Czech Republic, or Poland. This year, Schweinfurt teens, along with other nearby installations, travel to Turnov, Czech Republic to volunteer their time in the community.

"This ... is the best thing that Club Beyond does. It's really a life-changing experience," said Sara Doughty, Schweinfurt CB community director, about the trip that happens once a year in which all teens in the community are invited to attend.

Teens travel together and stay in cabins much like "stripped down hostels," Doughty said.

During daylight hours, they volunteer within the city of Turnov by cleaning yards, working on construction sites, and teaching English.

"(The locals') living situation is getting better and better," Doughty said, explaining that this may be the last year that teens travel there to help the community.

Prepared with simple Czech phrases before departure, students are challenged to communicate with the locals in their native tongue.

During their week-long trip, teens also take part in the Slovak and Czech diets of soup, breads, and fried meats.

While their days are full of physical labor, each evening a key-note speaker shares and challenges the youth to reflect on their life's purpose. Cabin mates gather in small groups and youth are given the opportunity to share about themselves.

"One big thing is that we don't allow them to have their iPods there," Doughty said. "It forces them to hang out, talk to other people. It's really a great time for them to process life in Schweinfurt."

A visit to Turnov and working with the locals "gives them a bigger picture of the world," said Elizabeth Cable, Schweinfurt CB associate

community director.

"Teenagers today don't appreciate what they have, and so them being willing to work ... and see how other teenagers live ... is great," Cable said. "And also instilling service in their lives is huge. Serving people is a way we can ... show love to those around us."

The week ends with a street festival and sports competition in the community. Easter services for Protestants and Catholics are provided by a military chaplain while in the Czech Republic, and teens are sure not to miss the Easter celebration with their families back at home on April 12.

To sign up your teen, volunteer as an adult, or just get more information, call Doughty at 01511-052-5836 or Cable at 0175-666-3339. For contacts in Bamberg, call Shea and Sandy Morgan at 0160-968-83180.

Ryan Berry saws roots off a stump at Club Beyond's service project last year.

Courtesy photo

Soldier program essential during all stages of deployment

by MARK HEETER
Schweinfurt CI Chief

The USAG Schweinfurt Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program is alive, and well.

Deployments traditionally tend to cut into the number of Soldiers who participate, according to Silvia Joiner, B.O.S.S. program coordinator, but the program does not stop.

"I've also noticed you will also have people back here who are in need of the same kind of services that B.O.S.S. offers," said Joiner, who has run the Schweinfurt B.O.S.S. program through several deployments,

We've got to work double-hard to keep (BOSS) alive and going in order to take care of everyone when they come back, as well as the people who are here.

Silvia Joiner, BOSS Program Coordinator

from Bosnia and Kosovo to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It's very important to keep the B.O.S.S. program alive and keep it going while the guys are downrange," she said.

"It's more important now, because we've got to target those Soldiers who are not deploying," said USAG Schweinfurt Command Sgt. Maj.

Ernest Lee, who promotes the program each week at the community newcomers' briefings.

"B.O.S.S. is a great program for single Soldiers," Lee said, adding that the program and trips open up to married Soldiers as well when space permits.

Over the next several months, B.O.S.S. has a number of trips planned,

in addition to regularly scheduled meetings, according to Joiner, with an eye on increasing participation to ensure the program thrives.

"We have a lot more people left on this post than we've had before," when a unit deploys, Joiner said, pointing to the 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, the 15th Engineer Battalion, and units scheduled to

activate or relocate in Schweinfurt over the next several months.

Still, she and Lee keep their eyes on the Soldiers from the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate) who recently deployed to Iraq.

"We've got to work double-hard to keep it alive and going in order to take care of everyone when they come back, as well as the people who are here," Joiner said.

The next B.O.S.S. meeting is scheduled for Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. in the Finney Recreation Center on Conn Barracks.

For more information, call 353-8476 or 09721-96-8476.

a look back at



Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment (above) participate in the Blackhawk Rendezvous in November, marking the official farewell of the brigade which is currently serving in Iraq. Cadets with the Wuerzburg High School Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (right) fold the flag one last time at the ceremony marking the closure of the Wuerzburg schools in June. Gary Sinise (top right) and the Lt. Dan Band perform for troops in July.

2008



*A time to laugh
A time to cry
A time of change*



Lt. Col. David Hurley and Command Sgt. Maj. Bradley Houston (above) unfurl the colors of the 15th Engineer Battalion during the unit's activation ceremony in July. A Soldier reaches out to the Dagger Brigade memorial (above left) on Conn Barracks in January. The 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division honored its fallen warriors with a ceremony to dedicate the memorial. A thrill-seeking visitor (right) to the USAG Schweinfurt community showcase goes topsy-turvy at the event in October. In addition to entertainment and activities, the event gave the community members a chance to explore everything Schweinfurt has to offer.



Col. Jeffrey Sinclair (above left) leads Soldiers of the 1st Infantry Division in the patch switch in March becoming members of the 172nd Infantry Brigade (Separate). 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment Soldiers (right) return from a 15-month deployment to Afghanistan with the 173rd Brigade (Airborne).

Photos by USAG Schweinfurt PAO

Young Falcons make up for lack of experience by being coachable

by ADRIANE FOSS

Editor

A young, relatively inexperienced team could be the ticket this season.

Or at least that's what Vilseck High School basketball fans are banking on.

Twelve of the varsity Falcons players are freshman and sophomores.

"This is the youngest, and probably the most coachable, team I've had," said Head Coach Rick Ritter, in his eighth year as VHS basketball coach.

"A lot of experienced players think they know everything; these guys are willing to listen," he said.

Listening, and perhaps learning, if the close losses against Kaiserslautern in December are any indication.

The Falcons lost the first two games of the season against K-town, 62-60 and 60-59.

Not bad for a fairly green team entering its first year of Div. 1 play.

"They were both great games to watch, close, exciting right out of the gate but heartbreakers for us," said Ritter.

The razor-thin losses to K-town were followed by the Falcons' third and fourth regular season losses, 66-50 and 63-51, to Bamberg—previously defending Div. 3 champs, now Div. 2 contenders.

A lot of experienced players think they know everything; These guys are willing to listen.

Rick Ritter
Falcons Head Coach

Falcons will amp up on repetitions in hopes of getting in top shape for the season's top challenge—Heidelberg and Ramstein, DoDDS' top two powerhouses.

Last weekend's win over TB Weiden, a local German basketball club, may have given the team some needed confidence.

They dominated the non-regular season practice game, 96-45. It doesn't count for the record, but it does give the Falcons a chance to work out the kinks.

Ritter said there was no lead scorer during the game. "It was very balanced,

Ritter said Bamberg has a large group of seniors who were "better prepared than us, more experienced on the court, and better conditioned."

"When you're conditioned, you do everything better in a game—shoot, pass, you play defense better, because you're not getting as tired," he explained.

And conditioning is where the Falcons will focus their energy during practice.

Ritter said lack of conditioning is one of their biggest weaknesses, "but not just our team, I mean DoDDS, in general.

"So many of our athletes play so many different sports year-round, and they only pick up the basketball every now and then, or just during the season," he said.

Ritter said the

with everyone doing their part, very much a team effort," he said, calling the balanced play another benefit of a having a young team.

"It's actually more of a team unit," said Ritter, "because all the players are more interested in sharing the ball, there is no leading scorer that just dominates; each game has someone else who's leading."

Still, there are several players fans will want to watch out for: experienced seniors Eric Hickman #21 and Shane Calder #22, sophomores Aaron Ware #24 (sustained a sprained hip muscle over the Christmas break during resistance training, but plans to be back on the court for the next game) and Trey Lawhorn #10, and freshman #32 Parris Manning, who netted 19 points in last week's game against TB Weiden.

Back from the long Christmas break, the Falcons will play another non-regular season game against German club DJK Neustadt tomorrow, before travelling to Black Forest Academy, where they will enter their sixth and seventh regular season games. The Falcons will play:

Jan. 23—home against Hohenfels

Jan. 24—away at Hohenfels

Jan. 30-31—away at Patch

Feb. 6—away at Ansbach

Feb. 7—home against Ansbach

Feb. 13-14—home against Heidelberg

Feb. 18-21—European Championships

Junior Trevor Ross (left) proves dominant during a Jan. 10 tip-off against TB Weiden, a local German basketball club.

Photo by Mary Markos



OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Students hit the slopes, learn more than how to ski

Story and photo by
MARY MARKOS
USAG Grafenwoehr PAO

Thirty Netzberg Middle School students exchanged pencils for ski poles Jan. 8-9 during a ski trip that was geared to do more than teach the basics.

The trip to the Ochsenkopf ski resort, organized by NMS physical education teacher Eric Mead and Vilseck's Outdoor Recreation, was designed for beginner and intermediate skiers as part of the school's Outdoor Education curriculum, mandatory for seventh-graders.

"The curriculum covers many outdoor activities such as cross country skiing, downhill skiing, hiking and orienteering," Mead said.

"The class is designed to develop leadership qualities, problem solving skills, and teamwork."

Teamwork and camaraderie was apparent as students navigated the mountain with four ODR instructors.

Kayla Clamage, a first-time skier who fell on more than one occasion, said everyone was there to help and support you.

"If you've never done this before and you fall, no one will laugh at you," she said. "They'll try to help you and make you feel better."

For the more experienced skiers, nothing could have been better than getting out of school to ski.

"You can make up your homework," said Katherine Mason, who learned to ski last year in Austria and was able to skip the bunny hill, "it is really fun... it's a good opportunity."



Vilseck ODR Facility Manager Brian Jansma (left) shows students how to make a "piece of pizza" Jan. 8 during the NMS Outdoor Education fieldtrip to Ochsenkopf Ski Resort.

The trip offered students more than the opportunity to carve the mountain, said Mead and NMS Physical Education Teacher Heide Hurd who also chaperoned the trip.

"More and more of our kids spend all their time watching TV or playing video games

when they could be outside enjoying nature and taking part in activities that involve fresh air and exercise," said Mead.

"I hope that by participating in our outdoor fieldtrips students will learn to appreciate the outdoors and take part in outdoor activities for

the rest of their lives," Hurd agreed.

"This is life-long. We are exposing (students) to activities they can do after they get out of school," she said, added that she hopes the student will understand that outdoor activities are a fun way to exercise, and will lead to a healthy lifestyle.

"Being physically fit does not necessarily mean having to go to the gym," she said.

Aside from the mandated curriculum, Mead sponsors an Outdoor Club at the school that exposes students to outdoor adventure through numerous field trips.

"These activities develop a sense of accomplishment among participants, and once a student gets hooked on the outdoors, they are often participants for life," he said.

Mead attributed the success of his program and his students' accomplishments to the ODR professionals that make the trips possible.

"The folks at Outdoor Recreation always put safety first on these trips, and they provide opportunities for our students that they would never get in the regular classroom," he said. "They have helped me organize downhill ski trips, cross country ski trips, caving adventures, geo-caching, fishing, white water rafting, canoeing, rock climbing, and klettersteiging for students."

"Twenty years from now students might not remember what happened in their regular classes, but I doubt they will forget spelunking in a dark cave, navigating through rapids in a white water kayak, or making it down a ski run without falling for the first time," said Mead.

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2009:

The Year of the NCO

Warrior Leader Course provides shared knowledge, experience to guide Soldiers' first steps as leaders

Story and photos by Sgt. MICAH E. CLARE
USAREUR Public Affairs Office

Column left, march!"

On that command, 11 Soldiers marched straight into a ditch. A group of their peers watching from the sidelines howled with laughter.

Spc. Richard Mata had given the wrong command during yet another after-duty-hours drill and ceremonies practice session.

But after reforming his squad, and hearing out some marching tips from more experienced squadmates, he tried again and got it right. Practice, patience and teamwork paid off, earning Mata a "go" on his D&C evaluation the next day.

Mata, one of nearly 500 U.S. Army Europe Soldiers who attended the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Warrior Leader Course at the U.S. Army Garrison Grafenwoehr in November, said the course helped him and his fellow students discover that the best way NCOs learn about Army leadership is from each other.

Learning from each other

"I've become more confident around my peers; they're here to help me," said Mata, a soft-spoken helicopter fueller from San Marcos, Texas, who is assigned to Company E, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation. "This has made me more willing to conduct NCO tasks. I've learned that NCOs do what's right because junior Soldiers will always remember what they see you doing, so when they mess up or act inappropriately it always reflects back on you and the rest of the NCO Corps."

Required for all junior Soldiers' promotion into the Army's NCO ranks, WLC is most young troops' first exposure to formal leadership training and their first real-world demonstration of the adage that leaders are made, not born. During

the four-week course, the sergeants -- as all WLC students are called, regardless of actual rank -- return to an environment similar to basic training. But unlike basic, they focus on how to lead rather than how to follow.

The course provides student leaders with plenty of opportunities to practice their newfound skills in positions of responsibility: daily barracks inspections, cadenced marches to and from the dining facility, intense physical fitness training, heavy doses of classroom time, nightly staff duty shifts and a four-day field exercise -- all organized under a student leadership chain of command.

It's not PLDC

Today's WLC looks a lot different than its Primary Leadership Development Course predecessor, explained Sgt. 1st Class Richard Marshall, a senior instructor at the 7th Army NCOA.

A recent makeover of the course's curriculum is just one indication of how the course has changed to fit the needs of the wartime Army.

Like many of his WLC colleagues, Mata said he often felt nervous about stepping up to take charge, but that the excellent NCOs who helped him along made him strive to be a leader.

"WLC is all about synergy -- NCOs teaching NCOs," said Marshall. "We, as instructors, are just here to facilitate their learning. No one can be taught leadership; they can only learn leadership styles from other leaders."

Constantly evolving

"WLC is a constantly evolving course. There's no comparison to what it's been in the past. NCOs of today have completely different requirements than they did before the War on Terror," he said.

As a result of that combination of constant evolution paired with shared knowledge and experience,

Marshall said, the course has maintained the same standards, but now focuses more on warrior skills and combat abilities.

The oldest academy

The 7th Army NCO Academy may be the Army's oldest, added its commandant, Command Sgt. Maj. Hu Rhodes, but the collective energies of its staff and students keeps WLC fresh and current.

The course will forever be changing based on the recommendations of those who become part of it, and every cycle will be a unique experience, he said.

"No one knows more about this course than the NCOs going through it," Rhodes said.

"I know I'm going back to my unit a different NCO than I (was) when I left," said Sgt. Donnie Bass, a cavalry scout from 1st Squadron, 91st Cavalry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade.

Assumptions

Bass, who grew up with a sergeant major father, said he arrived at WLC assuming he already knew everything the course had to teach.

But he said he soon realized he was lacking in some paperwork skills, and that the course opened his eyes to the fact that the leadership styles he learned from his father and the 1/91st aren't the only ways to lead.

"I've never spent much time around other MOSs (military occupations)," Bass said. "The Army is like a big engine that everybody should step back sometimes to see. It opens your mind to the fact that somebody else always knows something you don't."

As the weeks at the academy went by, several WLC students said, working closely with people with different backgrounds, personalities and levels of experience to tackle fast-moving, often stressful situations, day in and day out, took a

lot of patience.

Far from home

Spc. Francis Villanueva, a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic from Company B, 173rd Airborne Brigade Support Battalion, said he left his home in the Philippines for the new experiences he felt the Army had to offer. But he admitted that working with a team of new and diverse people can be trying at times.

"Working with people you aren't used to can be difficult," Villanueva said.

Mission first

"There are so many different cultures, even among the different jobs in the Army. Sometimes these people can be hard to get along with. But in the end that doesn't matter. Accomplishing the mission is the NCO's first priority. You have to work together to get it done. With positive thinking, some self-control, and the broad-mindedness to see that people have different ways of coming to the same end, you can get things done," he said.

That teamwork is an integral part of the WLC regimen, and pulling together and motivating each other during the course's many squad competitions, team-graded field missions, and student leadership challenges is as vital a skill as any WLC teaches.

Sgt. Raphael Casanova, a military police officer with the 212th MP Company, 18th MP Brigade, said growing up in a big family in Puerto Rico taught him the value of teamwork and helped him be a more effective squad leader.

Using their talents

"I take teamwork seriously," he said. "True leaders put everything they have into the group by getting to know their team members personally, and incorporate them by finding the best way to use their talents. When that one person in the group isn't pulling his weight, it

becomes everyone's problem. You have to find what it takes to motivate them."

Casanova said one of the most important discoveries made by WLC students in search of their own leadership styles is that Soldiers are influenced by respect -- not rank.

"While rank gives the guidance and procedures about who to follow, Soldiers will naturally want to follow someone who earns their respect," he said.

Using rank

"Good NCOs use their rank to help Soldiers," said Sgt. William Case, an AH-64 Apache helicopter electrician/armament repair specialist from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 159th Aviation, quoting one of his senior NCO instructors after a class. "Poor ones use their rank for their own benefit."

Case, a San Fernando Valley, Calif., native, said that quote taught him the need for leaders to be tactful. When challenged as a student platoon sergeant to dole out dreaded latrine cleaning duties or late-night staff duty shifts, he said, he had to learn to get his Soldiers to work together without using force or simply barking orders.

Where you came from

"It made me remember that I was once a junior Soldier, too, and I never liked getting told to do something my NCO wouldn't do himself," he said.

"Leadership isn't about grade and rank, but about experiences," said Spc. José Garcia, a 40-year-old former Colombian army soldier who is now a CH-47 Chinook helicopter repair team technician with Company D, 5th Battalion, 158th Aviation. "This is one experience I will forever build upon throughout my career as an NCO. Knowledge from more experienced people is one thing that is always okay to take for yourself."



Sgt. Anthony Garcia, a multichannel transmission systems operator-maintainer from the 12th Combat Aviation Brigade, busily prepares his wall locker for an inspection while attending the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Warrior Leader Course in Grafenwoehr, Germany in November. All Students at the academy have to follow a strict inspection layout for their bunks, wall lockers, and drawers.



Soldiers attending the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Warrior Leader Course practice room-clearing procedures at their classroom building in Grafenwoehr, Germany, November 30. After a block of basic instruction from academy instructors, classes are often handed over to experienced students.



Soldiers attending the 7th Army Noncommissioned Officer Academy's Warrior Leader Course listen to a class on squad movement techniques given by one of their fellow classmates, an infantryman whose experience was called upon to enhance the classroom experience. The Nov. 10 class was part of the four-week students' WLC cycle at the academy in Grafenwoehr, Germany.